



# The Philatelic Communicator

## Writers Unit No. 30 of the American Philatelic Society

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### The President's Message

First, I want to thank Steve Rod for taking over operation of the Writers Unit Breakfast at Anaheim when I had a small medical emergency and wasn't able to be there until the last 20 minutes or so. Well done, Steve.

Sorry I can't tell you what happened there. That will have to come from Steve, Ken, or someone else who was present the whole time. All I know is that we had a good turnout, and we look forward to an increasing number of people at future WUB's.

We are working toward some changes in these breakfasts, by the way. One is to make the one at STaMpsHOW the primary one, with the WU Hall of Fame inductees announced there instead of at the APS Spring Meeting breakfast.

There will still be the WUB at the Spring Meetings, but at a lesser formality, with some fun awards given out as well as the door prizes. George Martin is in charge of the Broken Pen award that will be presented at this WUB—send him your suggestions as to who should be considered for it.

The next WUB will be at APS/ARIPEX in Phoenix, Ariz., on April 22 at 8:30 a.m. (not p.m. as appeared in the *Linn's* story about the Anaheim event.) You may take this as my first call for donations of door-prize items, please.

And to help us get the time firmly in mind, let's all be aware that the time will always be 8:30 a.m., and not a half-hour earlier as has sometimes been printed and caused some confusion and unhappiness.

Details on the next WUB will be in the philatelic press a month or so prior to the Spring Meeting, as well as in the #1 PC for 1990. Stay tuned.

Although the last issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* was different-looking from what we have been used to, I heard no negative comments about the appearance, but rather have had many comments from members about how good the articles were in that issue. The content was due to the support provided by you, our members, in getting material to Ken, and to Ken's expertise as editor.

The different appearance of that issue was a result of an inverted illustration in the manual for the laser printer, and

> Page 54, bottom of column 1.

### Some Thoughts on Writing For the Philatelic Press

By Bill Welch

Every publication, from the photocopied specialty group newsletter to *Linn's Stamp News* to *The American Philatelist* has its readers in mind when deciding what articles to publish. Thus, it is not enough for you to know your subject. You also must know your prospective audience. The approach to an article will differ significantly from one publication to another.

Authors would save themselves considerable time and trouble if they simply would contact the editor before beginning to write their articles. Few do. Some publications have style sheets or "how to do it" instructions for authors. Most do not, but their editors usually will respond to authors who *briefly* outline their proposed articles and ask for guidance on overall approach, length, format, and illustrations.

There is an equally simple, yet often ignored, approach: careful reading of the publication(s) in which you wish to have your article published.

> Page 54, col. 2.

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## The Philatelic Communicator

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>From page 53, column 1.

thus the printer not knowing what it was that Joe Frye wanted it to print.

There is a set of very small switches (DIP switches) numbered 1 through 8 on the printer, and 1 and 2 were to be set to the "on" position. So Joe switched the first two so they matched the illustration, but still the print wasn't coming out the way it should have—particularly the italics.

It turned out that the illustration was inverted in comparison to the way the switch was actually installed in the printer—thus he was turning *off* switches 8 and 7. Once the right switches were set properly, Joe got beautiful print, as will be evident in this issue. We scanned the WU logo and sent him a disk with that on it so he can bring that into the banner, too. This issue contains part two of the "handbook" that began two issues back, on pages 18A through 18H. My thanks to those who have helped in this effort—Ken couldn't have done it without you.

Bob de Violini ■

>From page 53, column 2.

Consider whether the publication:

- Seems to prefer articles written in the first person or third person. In short, is the style breezy or stuffy?
- Uses photographs, or photocopies. (The larger newspapers and magazines know that their readers expect to see the former, not the latter, in their pages.)
- Focuses on some subjects to the exclusion of others. Don't bother offering your treatise on plate number coils to *Topical Time*. (An exaggeration, but similar attempts to push square pegs into round holes are not uncommon.)
- Has deadlines, publishing frequency, or space constraints that make it impossible for it to publish timely material.
- Uses long articles, short articles, or a mix.
- Has an index. Will your article be lost to posterity?

Some other tips for authors would include:

- Have someone else (a fellow collector, spouse—anyone) read your manuscript before you submit it, simply to give you some reaction to organization, flow, etc. Don't worry if the person knows nothing about the subject; that often is the best test of an article's readability.
- Talk to others who may have written for the same publication for their advice on dos and don'ts.
- Be sure you have current information. The editor who receives a manuscript addressed to a long-dead predecessor, at an extinct post office box number, has to question the author's attention to detail, and wonder what similar errors the article may contain.
- Be prepared for rejection. Don't take it personally when the editor declines to use your article, in a tersely worded "no, thank you" letter. (Editors often don't offer their reasons for rejecting a manuscript, simply to save themselves endless correspondence with argumentative authors.) The article may be fine, but not for that publication on that day. (Editors choose articles the way an artist chooses colors: some fit, some don't.)
- Don't let any of the above points discourage you from writing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bill Welch edits four philatelic publications: *The American Philatelist*, the monthly journal of the American Philatelic Society; the *Philatelic Literature Review*, quarterly journal of the American Philatelic Research Library; *El Trencito*, for the Peru Study Circle, and *The Seebecker*, for the International Seebeck Study Society. ■

### In The Next Issue:

- The 1990 Big Red Books — Scott, Stanley Gibbons, and Zumstein.
- Philatelic Investment Literature.
- Your Submissions.
- DEADLINE FOR ALL WRITERS: MARCH 15, 1990.

## Watching The Weeklies

By Robert A. Greenwald

Here is a short list of several articles that appeared in the weekly philatelic press during September:

- An item in *Stamps* about the USPS awarding of two computer contracts; the item dealt with how many machines, the dollar value, and the vendors.
- A front page item (*Stamp Collector*, Sept. 2) on the death of former Postmaster General William F. Bolger, with details of his career.
- Two pieces occupying an entire page in the same issue of *Stamp Collector* concerning the choice of a new company to provide Express Mail service; the bulk of the articles dealt with reaction from unsuccessful bidders, congressmen, the local community whose business will be lost, etc.
- An article in *Linn's* on the Australian pilots' strike and the implications for Australia Post vis-à-vis leasing of extra trucks and similar matters.
- A column by Les Winick (which is, in my opinion, one of the best regular features in *Linn's*) on the short-sighted actions of the postal workers' union, which forced the closing of the Sears retail store post offices because Sears wanted to staff the centers with store personnel rather than postal workers.

These five items clearly have something in common, namely, that they deal primarily with non-philatelic aspects of Postal Service news. The issue at hand can be stated thusly: What aspects of news about the USPS and its affiliates (or comparable foreign agencies) should appear in the philatelic weekly press?

The weeklies obviously have an insatiable need for news, and "real news" is always more welcome than auction puffery spit out by PR flacks, or stunning announcements of new hockey player stamps from Pacific atolls previously known only for their utility as radioactive test sites. So when a story about the USPS comes over the wire, there must be a great tendency to grab it for next week's issue.

Philately is closely intertwined with the doings and affairs of the USPS, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, etc. No one would argue, I believe, that the following topics are completely appropriate for inclusion in philatelic papers: notices of new stamp issues by major collecting countries; details of new postal rates or clarification of existing usages and conventions (e.g., personal use of precanceled stamps); changes in policy concerning stamp production, first day cancellation, philatelic sales, etc.; change in upper level management in the Stamps Division or at the BEP; major news about changes in printing operations at the BEP; and tables of data about numbers issued, plates sent to press, and the like.

Of lesser (or no) direct applicability to philately are the following, all of which have been seen in the past year: an obituary for an undistinguished ex-postmaster general; a notice of changing policy concerning retail window hours; an article about new uniforms for letter carriers; an article about new vehicles for carriers; news of postal personnel

contract matters; and, finally, an item about Congressional reaction to the USPS budget deficit.

As I understand it, the USPS has over 800,000 employees, and they have one (or more) newsletters and periodicals of their own. Naturally, philately counts within its ranks many current and former postal personnel, but they do not depend on *Linn's* or *SC* for news about their health benefits. To devote editorial space to non-philatelic news just because it involves the USPS or BEP seems to me a dilution of the mission of the philatelic weeklies, and I for one would prefer to see even outrageous personal opinion rather than an article about some minor aspect of the Postal Service operation.

The criterion should be that of philatelic relevance and no other; news value alone does not justify inclusion in a philatelic weekly. Will this news affect the issuance of stamps, their distribution and availability, or their usage? Will postmarks, routing, and the other issues of interest to postal historians be altered as a result of the event in question? Surely it matters little to most of us what brand of computer the USPS purchases for its executives, nor what type of truck is leased to carry a letter from Darwin to Perth. Historical information with direct philatelic relevance, i.e., an obituary of someone who worked closely with stamp collectors, is obviously of interest, but management and personnel matters, in areas with no philatelic connotation are just filler that should be omitted most of the time.

Letters on the relevance of the themes expressed in this space are welcome and may be quoted in forthcoming columns. Send them to Box 401, Wheatley Heights, NY 11798. ■

## Pick of the Litter-ature Award I

By Ken Lawrence

Herewith, as the lawyers like to say, a new literature award is born, to be bestowed upon one or another philatelic writer, editor, or publication in recognition of a particular quality that your editor deems praiseworthy. (In other words, this is an editorial, with pretensions.)

Aside from making certain that I see your literary product (which many writers and editors still neglect to do), there is no way to "enter" this contest which, in any case, is not a competition. I shall not attempt to identify the overall standards against which literature is supposed to "measure up," as the juried competitions do for better or for worse, nor to identify some lofty Hall-of-Fame or Pulitzer-type achievement. The editor's pick award may go to a club bulletin that would fail to qualify for any competition, or to an editor who has garnered so many golds that my kudos will be a mere flyspeck in comparison. Either way, I shall be looking for leadership, a contribution to philately that matters and deserves to be emulated, whether or not it is packaged to suit the current fashion, or keeps good company.

I can best illustrate with a practical example: The first Pick of the Litter-ature Award goes to Charles Yeager, editor of *The United States Specialist*, monthly journal of the Bureau

Issues Association. Charlie has taken over a publication that has been indispensable to serious collectors of U.S. stamps for 50 years and has molded it into something quite a bit more than that—a thoughtful forum for advancing views at the cutting edge of the hobby today. Though his magazine is devoid of sensationalism, Charlie has focused attention on some of the most vexing problems facing today's and tomorrow's collectors, has presented a series of carefully reasoned and respectful viewpoints and, without being judgmental, has clarified the choices available to us.

You need only compare Charlie's brand of editorial leadership to those commonly seen throughout the hobby to see the difference, and the virtue in his approach. Generations of collectors have been harangued with Revealed Truth by well-motivated writers and editors who want to save us from ourselves, or from the hobby's perennial bogeymen. Every collector with a pen or a word processor knows what the rest of us ought not to collect, and why. Who among us lacks an opinion on Scott's listing and pricing policies?

Instead of bull or bombast, the *Specialist* has given each reader the information, analysis, and debate necessary to make sensible choices. I long to see comparable published symposia in other philatelic domains; many have a more pressing need for demystification and scholarly standards than specialized U.S. collecting does, but await a writer or editor of sufficient sensitivity to perform the trick. That's all the more reason I admire Charlie's achievement.

I want to emphasize that commending Charlie Yeager's stewardship of *The United States Specialist* implies no slur on his predecessors as editor, all of whom, without exception, produced an outstanding journal. ■

## Letters to the Editor

From Lloyd A. de Vries:

I thought the last issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* was the best I've seen. The articles on the Philatelic Foundation controversy were very interesting.

I'm also flattered by the reference to me in Steven Rod's article on dealer-columnists. Can I use it as an endorsement? "A major first day cover/program dealer." Not bad.

Believe it or not, I, too, am troubled by the possible conflict of interest between my roles as a journalist and as a dealer. I try to separate them (as well as my role as an officer of the American First Day Cover Society), and I think I'm fairly successful at it. Those few times when I speak as a dealer, I've been careful to label them as such. The only blatant plugs I've given myself are when I'm going to a show, and former *Stamps* assistant editor Anne Patota instructed me on the careful wording. Besides, most of the time I forget to mention my show "appearances" because of the timing.

There's no question that a well-written column can enhance my standing as a dealer. On the other hand, I don't think I would hear all the news and, well, gossip that I do if I weren't a dealer. Sometimes a telephone call on one subject yields information on another. When that happens, by the way, I try

to be careful to ask the other party, "May I use that in my column?"

I learned of problems in 1989 ceremony program cancellations not through my own subscription—I don't have one—but in talking to one of my customers. Similarly, I learned of the planned issuance of the Love envelope at the AFDCS Convention this year when I talked to a convention official about my bourse table. It's not easy to scoop *Linn's* on USPS news.

The two roles are sometimes at odds: My recent column on add-on cachets certainly didn't win the adoration of two other FDC dealers, and possibly others. In fact, I now attend shows and rent tables in actual fear that one of the two dealers I singled-out will come up to me and start yelling. It's a lot easier to blast someone from the safety of, say, Jackson, Mississippi, than it is to be tied to a bourse table.

I've been very critical of the USPS first day cover marketing practices this past year, well before *Linn's* and *Stamp Collector*. I keep waiting for the Postal Service to cancel my FDC servicing privileges. As a dealer, I'd be smart to keep my mouth shut about the USPS.

One problem Steven Rod's principle of separation faces is that, at one time or another, practically every collector tries dealing. Practically every dealer starts as a collector. It's a very fine line.

Keeping the columns in a publication as news and not public relations is also the responsibility of the editor. I've had references to my cachet removed, for example, and when space is tight, those mentions of upcoming shows are the first to go (for me and for the editors). It would seem that *Linn's* took that step when it dumped a few of its columnists.

By the way, I pay full price for all my ads, and I have refused to advertise or publicize in *The Stamper* because I find its editorial policies reprehensible.

From Larry McInnis:

Steven Rod's letter (*PC* Third Quarter 89) about dealer-columnists came at a perfect time for me: I had just been victim of a terrific telephone attack by a Montreal dealer-catalogue publisher.

In my *Linn's* Canada column of Sept. 25, 1989, I compared the Darnell Stamps of Canada catalogue, 1989 edition, with the 1990 edition of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*.

Along the way I noted that *Darnell* prices had not changed, except for one single case, since the last catalogue was issued three years ago. They are the same in nearly every case with the catalogue before that, in 1985.

I mentioned that the back cover of the latest catalogue carried this: "I recommend it." (Larry McInnis, *Montreal Gazette*).

I went on to say in my *Linn's* column, "Well, I don't recommend it," going on to cite my reasons.

When Manny Darnell received his copy, he called me at my office. He slowly worked himself into a rage, first about my attention to his out-of-date prices, then about my nonrecommendations.

To deal with that last point, he sent to me by messenger a copy of a 1987 *Gazette* column of mine. In the last paragraph I wrote, in part, "I recommend it, not necessarily in lieu of Scott Canada, but in addition thereto." Darnell had underlined in red "I recommend it."

On the telephone, at the height of his anger, he screamed, "You don't know anything about stamps. You're not a dealer. You're just a journalist writing about stamps. You don't know anything about stamps."

Neither does Scott, he said. Or Unitrade (the Canadian philatelic supplier and publisher of the Scott Canada catalogue). They're not dealers.

He refused to admit a lack of logic after he said only dealers know anything about stamps. Collectors don't.

All dealers are expert? I asked. Yes. They deal in stamps every day.

What about Greg Manning? Darnell says he doesn't know anything about stamps. He buys to sell at auction. He's not a dealer.

What fools we collectors are. Darnell could not understand that collectors who pay thousands, even millions, for stamps must know something.

If Darnell is correct, and I suspect it's a view shared by many dealers, then the non-dealers writing for the philatelic press are, indeed, an endangered species.

I agree with Steven that Bob Dumaine's "duck" column is the most blatant conflict of interest, but not the only one by any means.

But what can we do about it?

#### From Ken Lawrence:

The controversy about stamp dealers as philatelic writers provoked by Bob Greenwald two issues ago has fixed attention on one element of a potential conflict of interest. It isn't the only one, and we non-dealer collector-writers should not be so smug, acting as though it is.

I have pangs of conscience in the opposite direction. Two editors have asked me to write articles on one of my collecting interests: the postal history of the Nazi Holocaust. I have respectfully declined for now, promising to consider it in the future.

My reason is as mercenary as the dealer who shamelessly flogs his wares in a column: I want to avoid stirring interest in the material, to keep prices down.

I learned a painful lesson by writing a popular and successful column on U.S. plate number coils: a writer's enthusiasm for his material can be contagious.

At one time I had the finest collection of PNCs on first-day covers. For rare and unique items I had paid \$5 to \$7.50 apiece. But when I started writing about them, demand flourished. Prices rapidly shot up to three- and even four-figure levels for scarce items, and dealers quickly learned that I couldn't pay those prices. After that, the new finds were offered to collectors with deeper pockets than mine.

A year passed, during which time a half-dozen previously unreported PNC FDCs were discovered. I wasn't able to acquire a single

one of them. At that point I threw in the towel and shifted my attention to other areas. I simply could not compete.

I wrote about and illustrated two of the most valuable PNC commercial covers, which the owner had promised to sell to me. Another collector read the article, offered the owner more money than I had, and I lost out.

My attitude toward the hobby is sufficiently vicarious that I am thrilled by every new item reported, even when I can't hope to own it, so writing my column is as enjoyable as ever for me. But I am no longer the innocent I once was. I have learned the hard way that writers do affect the market, sometimes to our own detriment.

These are my personal rules: If a particular item is newsworthy, I won't withhold it, even if publishing may hurt my chances as a buyer. I won't ask other writers to avoid popularizing material I'm trying to collect and, if asked, I will lend material from my collection to other writers for illustration.

The very fact that I have had to consider this ethical problem at all indicates that there is a potential conflict of interest in withholding information as well as in certain kinds of slanted self-serving reportage.

#### From Bob de Violini:

In response to Martin Margulis' letter (p.34), I would like to point out that both the APS elections and the WU elections are open to anyone qualified who would like to run for office.

The APS didn't "finally see the light" this year (as Mr. Margulis put it). There have been more people running for office—particularly for the director-at-large slots—than vacancies were available in several of the past elections. This year's APS election was unusual in that all the slots were contested. However, I fail to see that any "finally seeing the light" is evident in this situation.

The WU election was announced in the philatelic press several months before the deadline for nominations (but too late for inclusion in the appropriate issue of the *PC*). The nominations committee did ask a number of individuals if they would run for the two council vacancies, and were able to get two of them to consent to do so.

If the group's officers are to be "appointed" as he suggests, then who is empowered to do the "appointing" in contravention of the existing bylaws?

The next WU election will be held in 1991. I invite Mr. Margulis to stand for election to one of the offices for which he may be qualified.

#### From John F. Dunn:

Congratulations on an excellent Third Quarter issue.

I was particularly interested in the "The Scandal Story" (Part I). I commend Tom Maeder for having done a thorough job with a minimum of editorializing—allowing the reader to reach his or her own conclusions based on the statements of those who were interviewed, rather than the conclusions or opinions of the writer/interviewer.

Which brings us to Part II, by Ken Lawrence. It is my opinion that you have put a lot of words and intentions into people's mouths. I will let the others speak for themselves if they choose to. At *Mekeel's*, my primary concern is with your statement that "John Dunn won't stoop to Puleo's level, but uses Puleo's report as a pretext for puffing PSE."

First, if you check with Tom Maeder, you will find that I never made any reference to not stooping to Puleo's level. That is not my style. Second, if you objectively re-read the article to which you referred, you will see that I did not refer to Puleo's report. I stated "unsubstantiated reports of another scandal." At the time, my mind was more on discussions I had had with other sources, including Jack Molesworth, with whom I had spoken. I was aware of the Puleo article, but that would not have been sufficient to prompt any reaction from me. He was only repeating what I had already heard, but could not substantiate.

As for "puffing," that is your interpretation, not mine. I had good things to say about the PF and the APS expertizing service, as well as PSE, and closed with the addresses of all three. When discussing the PSE and APS growth, I noted, "The APS accomplishes this with a minimum of advertising. Professional Stamp Expertizing, which is a profit-making venture, has used advertising generously." (Never in *Mekeel's*, I might add.) There was no "puffing" of PSE, either intended or actual. If anything, I bent over backwards to be fair to the PF. (Writers Unit members who send me a #10 SASE can have a copy of the article to judge for themselves.)

Being positive about people and organizations in the absence of evidence to the contrary is not "puffing." This is one of the editorial policies upon which *Mekeel's* is structured. Yes, there are problems in the hobby, but it is, after all, a hobby—an escape, if you will. I thought that Robert Greenwald's review of our efforts was right on the mark, particularly his reference to our "fairly interesting selection of additional feature articles." That is where I am, trying to take *Mekeel's*, and which is why in my letter to the editor, which you were good enough to print, I invited Writers Unit members to participate in our mission.

#### From Herman Herst, Jr.:

Finest issue ever. It was good to see the Foundation story in print done by some people who know that the hobby has a right to know what is going on.

#### From James P. Bender:

The Third Quarter 1989 issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* is stale, too much rehash. If you are starved for articles, notify members via post card of your needs. I am sure they will respond with fresh material.

Editor's note: In real life, Jim Bender writes for the *National Enquirer*.

#### From Felix Ganz:

I enjoyed the last issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* immensely, even though I wondered whether our supposedly

academic journal should become involved in the kind of sleazy scene at the edges of philately.

#### From Harry Meier (To Bob de Violini):

I just received the latest issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*, and am most unhappy with it.

I have been under the impression that the journal is supposed to be devoted to writing and things like that. The story by Tom Maeder, "The Scandal Story," has absolutely no place in the *Communicator* as it has nothing to do with writing other than the fact that the other philatelic papers had the good sense to not print the stuff. If the alleged justification is that in the first paragraph, showing how the matter was handled by the different papers, it was a very poor excuse. This is not a subject for the *Communicator*. This followed by the story by Ken Lawrence "The Scandal Story II" being just more of the same. Regarding "Watching the Weeklies" by Bob Greenwald, again it serves no purpose and seems only to again launder more dirty linen in public. Many of the letters to the editor, which took a lot of space, really didn't say much that was related to writing articles, etc.

On the good side:

Ken Trettin's article on desktop publishing was super and the kind of thing the journal is "supposed to be doing."

"The Prussian Passive" was interesting but hard to read and follow the point of what he is saying.

"Guidelines for Exhibiting Philatelic Literature" was very good, and again what is supposed to be what the journal and the organization is about.

Congratulations to the Kansas City club for the "Pulitzer" award, a good idea long overdue.

Reviews were fine, though I'm not sure the catalog listings serve any purpose; again, the reviews may be being lost in the PC, as the books in many cases are not related to writing.

I hate to pick the journal apart, but it isn't what it used to be. If the subject matter continues, there may be a membership drop if other members feel the same that the journal isn't serving the purpose which it was intended. When it was announced that Ken Lawrence had become editor I had misgivings, having read some of his articles in the philatelic press along with some of his comments. I am not at all surprised that he has included what he has, as it gives him a place to air many of his peeves and unusual ideas that no place else would allow him to do.

#### From Bob de Violini:

Ken Sanford's continuing apparent paranoia about theft of literature entries is evident in his letter on p. 36. All I can say is that there must simply be a more trustworthy class of show-goer west of New York and New Jersey than he has had prior contact with.

Diana Manchester noted no problems with thefts in the five years of COLOPEX exhibitions, and at SESCAL we have just held our 12th annual philatelic literature exhibition with a similar lack of problems. This would tend to imply that we



have a much better class of collector attending our shows than Mr. Sanford is aware can exist.

We encountered this fear of his when the American Air Mail Society was at SESCAL in 1982. At that time, the Federation had four coin cases available, and we used three of them for his aerophilatelic items. (The fourth was used for certain of the SESCAL literature entries—see below.)

As for the SESCAL (and COLOPEX) method of using peg-board to display the items—this has worked excellently for us, with the attendees actually being able to handle and browse through the items at their leisure. It is not difficult to attach the nylon cord to the publications—it just takes a little manual dexterity, an hour or so of time, and some dedication to serving philatelic literature.

Yes, the two or three more expensive books (say \$50 to \$60 and up) are locked inside one of the coin cases, but more to assure they remain in good, clean condition than just to assure they remain at the show. Each one is opened to selected pages of interest, and viewers are invited to contact me or the show chairman if they wish to examine any of those more closely. And this happens once or twice most every year.

We also have a handout continuously available at the literature table that provides all the information needed for an attendee to order the item or join the society of choice. This has been a feature at SESCAL for the past seven years. (This is not a list from which the person has to copy the information as at STaMpsHOW, but a sheet that can be taken home for use.)

We have not seen a need to have anyone standing Mr. Sanford's guard duty, watching carefully that visitors do not cut the nylon cord that we use, nor do we have a need to frisk them for knives or other instrumentation. Perhaps this is a reflection of a more open, honest, trustworthy, and friendly nature of people west of the Hudson.

#### From Augustine Serafini:

I am glad you mentioned *The Synonym Finder*. It is the best. For philatelists and philatelic writers I have found *Webster's New Geographical Dictionary* to be nearly indispensable. It also contains historical information on historic sites.

#### From Bob de Violini:

Inclusion of the ISSN or ISBN on all literature items is an excellent idea, and I agree that it is something that should be looked for when an item is entered in a philatelic literature exhibition. If it is missing, the entrant should be encouraged to take the necessary steps to have one issued as described by Alan Warren in the Fourth Quarter 1988 PC.

I was not aware of the three-year gap in Mr. Sanford's two-part article on the subject, and would like to suggest an alternate way of obtaining the information. Simply order those two issues (2nd Qtr 82 and 2nd Qtr 85) of the *Philatelic Literature Review* from the American Philatelic Research Library, P.O. Box 8338, State College, PA 16803.

At \$2.50 per copy, the total price is not much more than

the \$3.00 requested by Mr. Sanford, and you will be getting the originals and much additional useful information as well. And, join the APRL if you don't belong already. It's only \$10.00 per year for their quarterly publication.

#### From James P. Bender:

Almost every stamp collector I know has an insatiable thirst for data, facts, information, and knowledge regarding the hobby. They not only want to be informed but want to be viewed as being informed. In our youth, it was so difficult to ascend the ladder and be respected by our elder peers. The pecking order had been established and we just had a need to earn their respect.

Who of us can forget when we finally had the Scott catalog number for every major value memorized? This allowed us to participate at club functions or visit dealer bourses with a sense of confidence. When we heard someone talking about a number 630, we didn't feel left out. We *knew* they were talking about the White Plains issue.

Stamp hobbyists at all levels of collecting have a penchant for the latest information regarding their area of collecting. Informed hobbyists will always continue their pursuit, not only for information but for additional material for their collections. This fact can be supported if one looks at the dramatic growth in subscriptions and classified advertising in the major recognized stamp publications. The sole exception might be *The Stamper Monthly* magazine. This phantom magazine publishes with the regularity of thunderstorms in the Mojave Desert.

This desire for continual philatelic potpourri has not escaped the notice of many full and part-time dealers. Within the past two years, the hobbyists have been targeted with newsletters galore. Many are freebies sent out to their customer base in hopes of retaining continued loyalty. Others are obtainable if you send a SASE and request to be placed on their mailing list. A few charge a subscription rate which could be considered obscene, considering what you get for your money.

These mailings are called newsletters, exposés, updates, and trends. Most are regional and are limited in circulation, while others pretend to be national. This oxymoron, however, does not cause an increase in circulation. Most are valueless as philatelic reference material and are redundant in topic or general news items. They are interspersed with obscure facts and usually notify the recipient about the availability of selected material in stock by the sender. Since many of the newsletters lack in-depth research, there is no need to retain them in one's philatelic library.

Freebies generally are not offensive since you must remember the axiom, "You get what you pay for." However, another axiom should be remembered when ordering others: "Caveat emptor."

One in particular calls itself an exposé. The *National Enquirer* has gained national fame and unequalled circulation figures by being this type of newspaper. The newsletter which claims to be an exposé is nothing more than one man's

personal account of his dealings and opinions of the personalities in the stamp hobby. Since this exposé has no social redeeming value, it can be dismissed as sophomoric predatory muckraking. Anyone who subscribes to this type of newsletter deserves to be disappointed. It has nothing to offer the hobbyist and you can probably learn as much about stamps by reading the Sunday funnies.

The free market will ultimately sort out this situation. A quality newsletter is both time-consuming and expensive to underwrite. Although the hobbyists seek diversified information, they will soon reject the ramblings of anyone who inflates their ego at others' expense. Until then, these editors will remain a legend in their own minds.

Editor's note: Jim Bender is an investigative reporter for the *Pompano Ledger* of Pompano Beach, Fla. Yes, this is the same Jim Bender who writes for the *National Enquirer*.

**From Caroline Brain:**

It has just come to my notice that my father, the late J. R. W. "Bill" Purves, was elected earlier this year to the Philatelic Writers' Hall of Fame.

Coming ten years after my father's death, this news has brought great pride and pleasure both to my mother, who is now unable to write herself, and to the rest of our family. While we ourselves have few contacts with the philatelic world these days, we are grateful to your Society for continuing to recognise the contribution of my father's work which gave him so much interest and enjoyment during his lifetime. ■

## Letters to the Publisher ("Producer")

**From Diana Manchester:**

I am up to my ears in a publishing project myself, so I don't have time for a long discourse. However, I wanted you to know that I appreciate your efforts on the PC 3rd quarter. It looks great with the exception of the bugs to be worked out.

I sympathize with the efforts of getting used to a new system. I am contemplating the switch of systems, and don't look forward to the change. I am getting too old to learn new tricks!

Once again, thanks for the great job!

[I was 62 on Sept. 12, 1989. You are definitely welcome! jff]

**From Steven S. Weston**

I really must congratulate you. The last issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* is ample evidence of your dedication to master a difficult word-processing program on-the-fly. I sincerely hope that you receive my comments below as assistance and not nit-picky criticism.

From the looks of the PC, you're using some software fonts. I've never worked with them because my old, original model HP LaserJet cannot accommodate them. In this area, you're way ahead of me. With the addition of an italic face

and a true bold face font, your typography would appear to be complete. I found the weight and style of your normal text face very easy to read; certainly much better than the Tms Roman that I'm limited to. WP seems to be doing an above average job of letter and word spacing with this font. Someday, WP may even perform kerning; but since only real nit-pickers would complain, it's not important (occasionally, I'll pick up my knife and manually kern a headline).

The double-column layout looks good and is readable; margins and gutter are ample without being oversized. WP is doing a very good job of justification; I saw only one line that had barely objectionable word spacing. Only the masthead column had letter spacing problems (too tight) and I think that can be fixed easily.

If you're composing each page in double-column format (instead of laying-up in double-column format), you may want to set your first tab-stop in each column the same distance from the columns' left-margins in order to avoid ragged paragraph indents.

By the way, I place all of my fixed settings (column definition, tab setting, etc.) in the Initial-Codes area of the document [Shift]-[F8] [D] [C]. That way, I won't accidentally delete or move them.

All in all, a very creditable job working with *WordPerfect*. Feel free to call me if you're stumped by WP and their customer support can't solve your problem. I've been working with WP since Release 3.x and know a few of its peculiarities.

P.S.; This looks terrible because I'm using a recharged toner cartridge. My first & last.

[I trust you will agree the main text typeface is now legible and attractive at 10-point size. I now have available over forty "soft" fonts and several thousand special characters, some of the latter not printable on my first-model Epson GQ-3500. See Felix Ganz' articles—pages 61 and 64—for an exercise in typography with some of these new goodies. One of the first commands put into the last issue—as well as this document—was [Kern On]. Thank you for your kind, welcome, and thoughtful letter of help. jff]

**From R. D. Rawlins**

Just a quick note with a "well done" for the first PC by computer. I thought your layout and organization excellent.

I hope the switch to italics is sooner than later, though. I found the shaded background distracting and suggest you just use quotes instead in the interim.

[Now we have italics. See *President's Message* page 53. jff]

**From Randy L. Neil**

Thanks for sending along your note about the problems and trials of getting out the latest issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*. I can well understand your plight since I, myself, am trying to work out a way to better understand what my computer is capable of with my *Aldus Pagemaker* program.

I believe, though, that the typeface you used in your September 26 note to us is much preferable to the font used





## SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT II

# Philatelic Writing and Publishing With Computers

### Desktop Publishing, Philatelic Division

By Robert A. Greenwald

Computing and philately go together like checklists and pencils! Never were there two hobbies more compatible. From the numerous areas in which they are harmonious, one can cite the following: Both hobbies appeal to the same quality of compulsive behavior that generates endless lists, places items in logical order, thrives on constant amendment and updating, and makes one redo everything many times to get it "just right." Both fields also require above average degrees of intellect and finances, and a substantial fraction of philatelists come from professions in which the desktop computer can be put to use in the workplace as well as in the hobby room. No wonder then that so many stamp collectors now consider their computers more useful than their tongues.

The uses of the computer in philately are many and have been enumerated elsewhere; the list includes inventory, spreadsheet valuation, creation of album and exhibit pages, club membership records, etc. We, of course, are concerned with publishing, and it is my thesis that in view of the degree to which philately and computing are innately simpatico, the use of the personal computer as an adjunct to philatelic periodical publishing is absolutely mandatory in 1989.

To whom does this apply? I am referring primarily to the newsletters of the APS affiliate societies, local clubs, special topic publications by individuals, and the like. The bigger and stronger the group, the more important it is to have a computer at editorial and/or publishing headquarters. Although Ken Lawrence, sans computer, will disagree, if I had been conducting the search for an editor for *The Philatelic Communicator*, I would have put computer familiarity and access on the list of mandatory requirements for the job.

How do I defend such a position? I will describe four different levels at which the computer can be brought to bear on philatelic publishing. First, there is the straightforward use of word processing rather than standard typing for manuscript preparation. The advantages here are obvious: i) the author can readily and repeatedly revise his work as requested by reviewers and/or editor and can submit legible copy with which the printer can easily work—nothing is more frustrating than reading marginal scribbles and long phrases squeezed into small spaces on top of a caret; ii) if time is short and if the editor has a compatible machine and software, the author can submit his work on disk and the editor can correct or edit the text "on screen," formatting on the fly in accordance with his stylistic requirements (e.g. underlining or boldfacing headings and subheadings, indenting, justified vs. ragged right, etc.); iii) all word processors have (or are compatible with) spellcheckers which not only correct the spelling and typographical errors, but also do word

counts, thereby allowing both author and editor to adjust the manuscript within the prescribed length limits. There is no defensible excuse for misspelled words in published material in 1989!

Of course, even if the manuscript is generated by word processing and is thoroughly checked for spelling and format, errors can creep in at the typesetting stage, unless of course the computer is used at the next level of sophistication, which is generation of hard copy suitable for direct paste-up. In 1989, this requires access to a laser printer or high resolution dot matrix machine; a daisywheel is unacceptable for this purpose. Even the most naive laser printer can generate a huge array of different fonts and type sizes, not to mention italics, boldface, superscripts, etc. (If real largess is available, a Postscript printer can emulate modern typesetting equipment, but that's carrying things a bit too far for routine use.) For publications printed by offset, as most newsletters are, the computer allows the editor or publisher to endlessly format the text until the piece in hand is just perfect in size and appearance for pasting into the spot allotted. If the piece is damaged in pasteup, another can be made in a few seconds. How can any other system exist in the era of the computer driven laser printer?

Thirdly, there is true desktop publishing, Level 3. For a few hundred dollars, sophisticated software can be purchased with which the shell of a publication, e.g., the banners, masthead, columns, page numbers, and invariant information can be readily created and stored. Once that shell is in the computer, the text for various articles can be "absorbed" into the shell, and the software will format each article, under the editor's direction, into the columns and spaces allocated. No pasteup will be needed, as each page will spit forth from the laser printer in camera-ready format. The good programs can take in text from any major brand of word processor, so each author, creating manuscripts in Sheboygan or Tucumcari, can submit the material on disk; the editor can read and revise,

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and then final assembly consists of retrieving each article into the shell the day before the copy is needed by the printer. Furthermore, graphic material can readily be incorporated, and the text can be made to "flow" around the illustrations. Graphics can take the form of commercial "clip art" supplied by many vendors, custom work drawn by someone with artistic talent (e.g., a club logo), or most importantly, images (e.g., postmarks, stamps, maps, or entire covers) which can be captured by a hand-held scanner and converted into a computer-compatible file that is readily incorporated into the final document. Surely the advantages of desktop publishing are readily apparent.

Finally, there is Level 4, which applies only where text is to be typeset by conventional printing methods. If a human being must rekey the text, typing it all over again, whether it be into a computer or into a typesetting machine (are they still called Linotypes? [No. ed.]), error can be readily reintroduced, especially in spelling. To avoid this, many typesetting facilities are now compatible with personal computers; text from the author, on disk, already spellchecked and edited, is edited once again by a typesetter who enters formatting commands (type size, font, indents, special features, symbols, etc.), and the text is then fed into the machine that generates high resolution type. Such facilities are not common, and the costs are substantial, but if conventional typesetting is the printing method applicable to the publication at hand, surely it is better to typeset from disk than from printed copy. My last article for *PC* was letter-perfect when sent to Ken Lawrence, but it contained a number of errors when the mailman brought the final version back to my door.

This manuscript contained 1134 words when sent to the editor, with nothing misspelled. Hopefully, it will appear in print the same way; that's the way it should be in 1989. ■

## Spelling Checkers

*By David A. Kent*

One of the more interesting features of word processing software is the "spelling checker." Those who first hear of such programs seem to assume that they use some type of computer magic to ensure that every single word in a document is spelled absolutely correctly. It would be nice if it were so, but in truth, there is nothing magic about it, nor does the program offer any kind of insurance. It is just a clever adaptation of something a computer happens to do quite well, and that is comparing things.

The key to a spelling checker is a computer file, usually called a dictionary, containing a large number of correctly spelled words. The program simply compares each word in the document (where a "word" is defined as a group of characters between spaces) to each of the words in the dictionary. Any word which cannot be found in the dictionary is flagged as an error. It may sound like a lot of time consuming work, but as noted, computers are good at comparing things, and for most word processors it takes relatively little time.

The method of correcting misspelled words varies with different word processors. Some check spelling as you type,

and stop or beep if a misspelled word is typed. However, this process tends to slow down the work of the word processor and seems to be used mostly on "intelligent typewriters." With most word processors you must run the spell checker program against the document after you have typed and saved it. Of these, a few pop the offending word up on the screen as they go, and allow you to make corrections on the spot. Perhaps the most common format, however, is for the spell checker to flag each misspelled word, either by making it blink or highlighting it in some other way, and proceed on through the document in this way until it reaches the end. You must then edit the document again to make corrections.

Spelling checkers often offer helpful ways of correcting misspelled words. On most, you press a key to enter a "check for misspellings" mode in which the program goes through the document, stopping at each word that was flagged during the previous check against the dictionary. As you stop at each flagged word, you are given the option of how to correct it. Many, at the press of a key, will search through the dictionary for potentially correct words and display them on the screen. If you select one of the words offered, it immediately replaces the misspelling. Most also allow you to stop for a moment and overtype the word to correct it. You may also simply ignore the flagged word and proceed to the next misspelling.

Spelling checker dictionaries on most word processors contain an impressive number of words, often 75,000 and up. Most also have an internal algorithm (or formula) which enables them to develop plurals and past tenses, so that these forms of words need not take up space in the dictionary. Nevertheless, it is obvious that no dictionary can contain every word used in English writing. Most word processors allow you to build a separate dictionary (often called a custom dictionary) with technical words you use in your regular writing. I found, much to my dismay, that my dictionary did not include "philately," and it was one of the first words I added to my custom dictionary. My custom dictionary now contains a couple of hundred words, and many would be familiar to any philatelic writer, for they include such words as ATA, APS, Herman Herst, and George Griffenhagen.

From this description, it should be obvious that there are certain limitations to what a spelling checker can and cannot do. For one thing, it cannot tell if a word is the correct one for the context. I am a fast but not very accurate typist, and I often mix up the words *in*, *is*, and *it*. Each passes the checker, but may not be what was intended. I have therefore learned to proofread my writing for common small words to make sure each is correct in its place. I also commonly mistype "s" and "d" at the end of words ("issues" for "issued"), and check these carefully, too. As you learn to use a spelling checker, you will find little errors you often make that need to be double-checked manually.

A more difficult problem is that of proper names. Most spell checkers have a few of these in the dictionary, but almost every document you type will have several that get flagged. You need to use common sense in deciding whether to add these to the custom dictionary. The name of a stamp designer whose work may never appear again on

stamps is not a good candidate for inclusion in a dictionary, but Bradbury Thompson has his hand in almost every U.S. stamp design these days, and he is now in my dictionary. The larger the dictionary, the longer it takes to check each document, and there are also limits to dictionary sizes, based on the amount of disk space you have available.

Once you have decided not to add every proper name to your dictionary, however, another hazard appears. When you become accustomed to a spelling checker, there is the temptation to hit the "ignore" key the moment the program stops on a proper name. Here you must learn to stop and review the spelling manually, or your manuscripts will come out with all the common words spelled correctly, and all the proper names misspelled!

Most spelling checkers also offer another interesting feature. Since they proceed through the document word by word, many count the number of words and give the word count in the corner of the screen when they finish. Although modern computer publishing tends to measure by column inches rather than words, word counts can still be useful to editors in estimating the amount of space your manuscript will need. You can be helpful to your editor by providing the word count for each manuscript. A few adjustments to the word count may be needed. The title, byline, address, and page continuation headers and footers will not be part of the final text, and should be deducted from the count. Spelling checkers also ignore numbers, for obvious reasons. If your manuscript contains a significant number of dates, catalog numbers and the like, you should increase the count to allow for them.

One final word on dictionaries themselves. Many word processing programs advertise the brand of dictionary on which the spelling checker is based. Ignore this fluffery from the advertising department. The American spelling of English words is quite standardized today. The significant differences between desk dictionaries are in their definitions and formats. Not a one of them contains lots of misspelled words. You should choose a word processing program on the basis of its features, capabilities and price, not the dictionary that was used for its spelling checker. ■

## Home Computers and Club Newsletters

*By Bob de Violini*

As the Affiliates Coordinator for the APS I regularly see the journals and newsletters of over 165 different philatelic societies. These groups range in size from 40 or 50 members at one extreme to a dozen with memberships of over 1,000. Many have about 250 to 350 members.

Their publications are prepared by a variety of processes, principally dependent upon the treasury of the society—usually typescript or typeset, and put onto paper by offset printing or xerography. A few can afford to use professional typesetters and professional printing techniques. These are beyond the scope of this discussion other than to say, "That's nice if your group can afford it."

## Computer System Costs

Over the past few years, the capability of personal computers has increased dramatically while their cost has remained about the same. In many cases an "entry-level" machine is available for well under \$1,000. Similar changes can be seen in both printers and word-processing software.

As a result, more and more journals from the smaller societies are being produced using computer techniques. This is true of both the specialty society journals and the local club newsletters.

Since we are involved with getting words printed onto paper, I will not go far into the varieties of computer systems that are available, but you should be aware that very nice IBM-compatible computer systems, including a 32-megabyte hard drive, an amber monitor, and a capable dot matrix printer can be had for less than \$2,000. The cost can be increased in a variety of ways—I'll leave that discussion to computer magazine ads and reviewers.

The editors of a few societies have access to laser printers, but these devices are still well beyond the personal budgets of most of us. The \$2,000 mentioned above will just about cover the costs of a laser printer and necessary accessories; more if you want to expand the memory in the printer.

The once frowned-upon dot matrix printer has gained respectability, with a near-letter-quality (NLQ) output available on most all models, and a variety (though perhaps a bit limited) of fonts and sizes available even on those printers selling in the \$200 area.

For printers in the \$300 to \$350 price range, the variety of fonts has increased quite a bit, and these higher-priced printers have other useful characteristics, too. Again, I'll refer you to the computer magazines and ads for the details and options available.

So, since your computer output most likely will be on a dot matrix printer, getting good, clear, clean "camera-ready" copy out of these printers is important. The printing firm can do only so much magic, and is limited by what is presented as a master to print from.

There are those people (including some editors) whose philosophy is, "I don't care how it looks; as long as I can read it, and get something of use from the publication, I have no complaints." This leads to acceptance of sloppy workmanship.

There is also the philosophy that a publication is a reflection of the organization it represents, and as such, its appearance should be of as high quality as the budget of the society and ingenuity of the editor will permit. I hope that our members all subscribe to the second philosophy.

So, let's talk about what can be accomplished with the tools available to most of us.

## Word Processing Programs

For this discussion I will assume that you already have, or will soon be getting, a computer system. I will also assume that this is or will be an IBM-compatible system (which 90 percent of the world uses).

A new computer system will often come bundled with a variety of programs—often (but not necessarily) including a

spreadsheet, database, and a word processing program, and maybe some general utility routines, etc. These are generally not the top-of-the-line programs, but they are often very serviceable for the beginning user (and sometimes even beyond).

The item of most interest to us is the word processing program. As in most everything else in the computer world, there is a wide variety of choices in what word processor one uses. First, though, there are two basic types—those that are normally used to prepare correspondence, and those that have been developed to prepare “newsletters.”

The real word processors are the better way to go in terms of software. In the lower price range (below about \$125 or so) are included such programs as *PC-Write*, *PFS: Professional Write*, *Q&A Write*, etc. At the higher end (\$200 plus) there are programs like *Microsoft Word*, *WordStar 5.5*, *XYWrite III Plus*, and *WordPerfect 5.0*.

The last-named is what Joe Frye is now using to produce *The Philatelic Communicator*, and it does take some time to learn all its capabilities. But is a very fine product that is generally available for under \$250.

In the second category are such programs as *NewsMaster II*, *PFS: First Publisher*, etc. Most include the ability to incorporate graphic images (as do *Word*, *WordStar 5.5*, and *WordPerfect 5.0*), usually of the type prepared by the *Print Shop* or *Printmaster* programs.

Some do better than others, but from what I have seen of the output of these, none have really satisfactory fonts. In general, though they may be fine for a quick newsletter, or to produce a flyer for a cake sale or car wash, to my mind they are not really suitable for a philatelic publication.

I have purposely omitted the high end of these programs, for they stand on a plateau by themselves—*Aldus Page Maker* and *Ventura Publisher*. They require a generally more capable machine than many of us have, and also require a laser printer to utilize all their capability. If you have the necessary tools, or can afford to move up to them, then, by all means, do so. Discount prices for either of these two programs are in the area of \$475 to \$500.

## Printers

Okay, so now you have a computer and word processing software. What about a printer? As I indicated earlier, there are quite a few good ones available, and their prices can range from around \$200 to about \$400. The main difference is in the kind of print head they have—either 9-pin or 24-pin. This designation refers to the number of wires that are in the part of the printer that moves across the paper, putting your text on the paper.

Until a few years ago, most printers were of the 9-pin variety. These heads contain a vertical row of nine thin wires controlled by an electromagnet in such a way as to put a pattern of dots on paper when the pins are fired against the ribbon that lies between the head and the paper. If done properly, the dot patterns are recognizable as letters.

Then the 24-pin head was developed. At first, these printers were significantly more expensive than the 9-pin printers, but their price has come down to where they

sometimes can be had for only \$100 or so over the price of a 9-pin printer. In these printers, there are three closely-spaced, staggered rows of fine wires to form the letters on the paper.

And in the process, both kinds of printers have been refined to produce very acceptable-looking text. No more the standard dot matrix look of letters, where the reader had to almost play “connect-the-dots” to read what was there; these machines produce very acceptable, shaped letters in a variety of fonts, and usually in at least three pitches—10, 12, and 17 characters per inch, sometimes noted as pica, elite, and micro sizes on a typewriter.

Again, there is a variety of makes, models, and prices to choose from. Some of the better-known brands are *Epson*, *Panasonic*, *Star*, *Alps*, *Toshiba*, *Okidata*, and *Citizen*. Most all have Epson-compatible and *IBM Proprinter* modes. These are the standard modes that interface between all the printers. Read the computer magazines for comparisons, and see samples of the fonts available before you buy.

## Getting the Best Output from Your Printer

There are a few simple rules here. Remember what is said over and over again about having a good-looking stamp exhibit? Get a clean, clear image from your typewriter—clean the type, use a new ribbon. The same holds for a printer output, though you don't have the type to clean. But an occasional cleaning of your print head won't hurt. And get a new ribbon for the final run of each output you prepare for printing.

The old ribbon that may look fine for general correspondence will very likely give you a grey-appearing final copy. (And *do not* attempt to rejuvenate your old ribbon by applying WD-40 to it, as is sometimes suggested. That can ruin your print head. Don't be cheap—spend the few dollars for a new ribbon, it will cost less than buying a new head.)

Though there are some compensations for a poor master that can be accomplished by your printer (the person, not the machine), his success is limited by the quality of the copy you provide. The real magic is in your hands. Provide the printer with the best possible printing masters that you can create. The secret word is *contrast*. Make your images black-on-white instead of grey-on-white.

The new ribbon you just bought will help with that. And since the letters on your piece of paper are made by dots, another secret is to place them close together so they don't look like individual dots.

Choose a 12-pitch NLQ font. This gets more characters per line, and more words per page than 10-pitch, with no significant loss in legibility. The NLQ font will require two passes across the page for each line, and so assist in getting a dark image, too. The 17-pitch option is useful if you really need to get a lot of information into a small space.

If you don't have a NLQ font on your printer, then use the double-print option in your word processor. This will cause the printer to pass twice over each line, thus making for a darker master.

And, to get some variety in your newsletter, experiment with the double-wide and double-high modes that many of

the printers have available, as well as with the *italics*, and *sub-* or *superscript*.

If your printer has it, do not use a script font for the general text. That is extremely difficult to read for any length of time, regardless of how "pretty" you may think it is. There are also a number of font-generating programs available that can be loaded into your printer to create special effects, such as printing in Old English, or other different characteristics. Any of these should be used sparingly, and with caution.

If you consistently find that you have more text than can easily be put onto the pages you have available, dig into the manual that came with your printer, and examine the possibility of changing the number of lines per inch that the printer will print.

The standard value is 6 lines per inch (66 lines per 11-inch page), and some printers have a switch to go to 8 lines per inch. That spacing is useful if you are printing at 17-pitch, but 12- and 10-pitch text lines will be too close together and be very difficult to read.

However, you should also consider the possibility of 6.5 lines per inch. That will put 72 lines on an 11-inch page, with no real loss of readability. And another consideration is to go to a two-column format as in the *PC*. There has been discussion already about flush-right vs. ragged-right for those columns, so I won't get into it here, other than to suggest that you try both, and see which is the more readable for you.

#### Conclusion

I have omitted mention of the dedicated word processors, such as those available for \$300 to \$600 from Brother, Panasonic, Smith-Corona, and other firms. They are good for their purpose, but provide little flexibility in terms of choice of software (you have to use what they provide), graphics usage, font variations, etc.

With a computer system, you can also establish a database to let you prepare mailing labels, keep a club roster, establish your own stamp inventory listings, etc.

#### Where to Learn More

Pick up a few of the computer magazines—particularly those that carry reviews of the products you are interested in. *PC Magazine* (probably the best subscription bargain around—22 issues a year for about \$32), *PC/Computing*, *Personal Computing*, and *PC Resource* are four good ones, and there are several others.

Check your library or bookstore for books designed to help you learn more about the software you have bought—sometimes the manuals provided are more difficult to comprehend than IRS's income tax instructions. And join a local computer users' group. Ask at your computer software and hardware stores about where they meet. This is the place to learn how to get the most from your system—from other computer users.

And don't forget the books about designing and printing newsletters. Here are four to consider:

Arth, Marvin and Helen Ashmore. *The Newsletter Editor's Desk Book*, Parkway Press, Shawnee Mission, Kans., 3rd ed., 1984.

Beach, Mark. *Editing Your Newsletter, How to Produce an Effective Publication Using Traditional Tools and Computers*, Coast to Coast Books, Portland, Ore., 3rd ed., 1988.

Boston, Bruce O., ed. *STET!, Tricks of the Trade for Writers and Editors*, Editorial Experts, Inc., Alexandria, VA., 1986.

Parker, Roger C. *Looking Good In Print, A Guide to Basic Design for Desktop publishing*, Ventana Press, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1988. ■

### Information Sources for the Desktop Publisher

By Kenneth Trettin

If you already own a computer or are considering a purchase, you probably either subscribe to or occasionally buy one of the magazines specifically written for your particular model or at least one of the general personal computer magazines. Virtually all of these have columns, special sections or even special issues devoted to the subject of Desktop Publishing, or DTP.

However, because these publications have a broader scope of coverage, the amount of information available about our particular subject can be rather limited. Enter the specialized DTP magazine. The first of these made their appearance just shortly after the Apple LaserWriters, *Ready•Set•Go*, and *PageMaker* hit the market. I have identified five such specialized magazines in the U.S. at the present—there may be more. These do not include several rather high-priced *newsletters* "full of helpful hints that will save you hours and make your publications more attractive" which seem to work out to several dollars per page of information that could be acquired elsewhere at a more reasonable price.

Two of the five (the first two to appear) were originally started by small independent publishers. One has been acquired by a major computer magazine publisher and the other by a big-league magazine publisher. The third magazine is oriented toward a software publisher, the fourth toward a particular line of hardware, and the final one to a combination of desktop and electronic publishing. They all are useful to anyone using a computer to produce a publication; and in this column I will simply assume that everyone reading it is involved in some aspect of producing philatelic publications.

***Publish!*** (ISSN 0897-6007), monthly by PCW Communications, Inc., 501 Second St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

\$39.90 for 12 issues, \$79.80 for 24 issues, \$119.70 for 36 issues. New orders call 800-222-2990. This magazine is discounted to at least \$21.97 for 12 issues. It is available on magazine racks.

***Personal Publishing*** (ISSN 0884-951X), monthly by Hitchcock Publishing (a Capital Cities/ABC Company) 191 Gary Ave., Carol Stream, IL 60188. \$24.00 for 12 issues. Subscriptions are discounted at \$21 for 12 issues, \$39 for 24 issues, call 800-727-6937. It is available on magazine racks.



*Publish!* and *Personal Publishing* are both general DTP magazines including articles about all makes of computers and all software. However, since in this field the Macintosh and MS-DOS are the two most widely used systems, most of the articles concern either one or both of these systems. (A major concern now is the ability to transfer information between the two systems.) They both regularly carry letters to the editor asking for articles about Amiga or Atari systems and occasionally an article about them.

*Publish!* has a regular makeover column where professional designers redesign various publications. *Personal Publishing* has a regular column on type, looking at a particular face in depth each month. Both carry a large number of reviews of both software and hardware related to the DTP field, articles regarding graphic design, and occasionally articles related to printing and production of a publication.

*ITC Desktop* (ISSN 1042-3923) bimonthly by International Typeface Corporation, 2 Hammarckjold Plaza, New York, NY 10017. \$24 per 6 issues (Box 51492, Boulder, CO 80321). This publication is available free on a controlled circulation basis but do not ask me how you would get it.

Only four issues of this publication have appeared. It is published by a type foundry whose major interest is in promoting its own typefaces. However, these faces are available electronically from a number of sources who license them from ITC. As a result you will see faces such as ITC Avant Garde Book or ITC New Baskerville Roman available from several software publishers and for most computer systems.

The main thrust of this publication is how to use type effectively, how to choose a font, and how to lay out the publication. Very little is said specifically about any particular computer system. It lacks the long product reviews of the previous two publications and although not as thick a publication, it contains as much or more meat. Good reading if you are concerned about the appearance of your publication.

*PC Publishing* (ISSN 0896-8209) monthly by Hunter Publishing Limited Partnership, 950 Lee Street, Des Plaines, IL 60016. \$36 for 12 issues (Box 5050, Des Plaines, IL 60019-9435). May also be available on a controlled circulation basis but no information is available.

This publication is specific to the MS-DOS operating system (and presumably to the new OS/2). There are regular columns devoted to the most popular DTP software packages. Although system-specific, this publication contains many good articles about Desktop Publishing, including occasional articles of value to small press publishers who do not even use computers.

*Electronic Publishing & Printing* (ISSN 1044-0852) nine times per year by Maclean Hunter Publishing Co., 29 N. Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL 60606. \$35 per year. Yet another publication at least sometimes available on a controlled circulation but the magazine does not carry any type of subscription cards.

A variety of software and hardware reviews for various systems (MS-DOS and Macintosh) makes up the major portion of this publication. It is fleshed out with solid ar-

ticles about graphic design, educational publishing, some real-world examples of desktop publishers, and alternative publishing (non-paper or various electronic media for distributing your work). Again this publication is non-specific with regard to computer system or software. It does, however, seem to project an image of presuming that you are already involved in publishing on a level higher than that of the typewriter/duplicator level.

I might suggest that if you are currently using a computer with your publication you might wish to pick up an issue of some or all of these publications. There will undoubtedly be something of value in some of them for you. If you are considering a computer system, then a look at these publications may help you to decide if you should be making a purchase. ■

## Step Aside, Philately—

### There's a Computer in My Life

By Karen Weigt

"Warning! Danger lurks ahead . . . Existing inside this room is a severely sick woman who chooses to pass her time by playing with a mouse! Enter with caution or she might SCAN you!"

I confess. The sign my daughter posted on the door of my room is valid. The mouse, of course, is not a rodent and the scanner isn't a weapon. Instead, they're electronic lures to microcomputer addiction—an obsession which equals philately in its ability to devour time and erode the pocket-book. Yes, I'm hooked, and philately is partially to blame. I used my first computer exclusively for producing club documents, newsletters, and correspondence. My downfall was to go beyond a simple word processor to a desktop publishing program, which forced me to dig in and find out what makes a PC tick. In the end, however, curiosity didn't kill this cat, but rather the knowledge gained within a kindly club atmosphere.

I didn't always refer to the Madison Wisconsin PC User's Group as a "kindly club," and there's a lesson for all newsletter editors in this story. I'd been a member for approximately a year, received the 40-page monthly newsletter, but never attended a meeting. Why? It was easy to acquire, fill out, and mail the membership application with my check. It was easier yet to be intimidated by the highly technical content of the newsletter and lack of clear-cut meeting information. Obviously this was an elite group of electronic wizards, who met in some building on the University of Wisconsin campus where parking a car is a horror story in itself. I didn't need that experience. It's tough enough being the new kid on the block, walking into a room and asking all the dumb questions.

Then it happened. One day my *Bits & PC's* arrived and right there on the front cover in big, bold lettering was the next meeting date, time, location (with an address), and a map showing available free parking. The following page introduced a new newsletter editor, extended a warm welcome to the general meeting and a "no-question-is-too-dumb" New Users Special Interest Group. Additionally, I



found that I could actually comprehend a few of the articles.

Computers became my second hobby after just one meeting, and as the language barrier dissipates I'm more comfortable about asking questions and joining in with the casual conversations. They typically revolve around the latest price of RAM chips, who got what deal where, motherboards, buses, and, since we're a PC club, some Big Blue and Mac bashing. The group offers discount supplies and has an extensive library of public domain and shareware programs at ridiculously low prices. Club members also gladly helped me spend my money for a new system to better serve my desktop publishing interests—a custom-built, souped-up 386SX. (Aren't you impressed?)

I'm now Associate Editor of "Bits & PC's," a job which provides me further opportunity to learn, not only about the world of computers, but also how the PC can be used most effectively for the production of newsletters. All articles for *Bits & PC's*, for example, are submitted either on diskette or down-loaded from the club-operated bulletin board. Layout and final editing is done in Ventura. The only hard copies to see the light of day are one for proofreading, and the final which goes to the printer for reproduction and mailing.

I also belong to an Electronic Publishing User Group, where the members are primarily professionals in the field, with company-paid dues. It's a bit more formal, but a fantastic place to pick some heavyweight brains. We've had programs on fonts, layout art, writing for impact, and tours of local print shops. During post-program chat, I've picked up on the difference between a laser and Postscript printer, the best place to buy laser cartridges or have them recharged, how to deal with commercial printers, solutions to my desktop publishing program dilemmas, etc. Occasionally, we'll get a free diskette of shareware fonts or desktop publishing or printer utilities.

Beyond philately, there's a computer in your life too! When (not if) it happens, be sure to get involved with your local user group. In the meantime, go ahead and start that new collection of postmarks from no-man's land. I'm getting a modem! ■

## Software for Shakespeare

By Ken Lawrence

I have edited this supplement with a lighter touch than usual, partly because its subject matter is beyond my personal expertise, but also in order to make some cautionary points—principally, that computerized writing and publishing is not *inherently* better than any other kind, and often is worse.

### How Quickly They Forget

Bob Greenwald thinks my lack of computer skills ought to bar me from being your editor. Let me respond first by reminding him of some history.

Bob became the founding editor of *The Interleaf*, quarterly newsletter of the Booklet Collectors Club, in September 1982. The format was single-column typed letter size pages, corner stapled, in whatever fonts and spacings the

authors submitted. The pages had no headers or footers. Graphic illustrations ranged from nonexistent to awful.

*The Interleaf* was one of the most interesting and informative philatelic specialty publications despite its amateurish appearance. Largely because of Bob Greenwald's flair for provocative overstatement and his opinionated immodesty, traits readers of this quarterly are learning to anticipate with affection, it was fun to read, even for a fairly casual booklet collector like myself. It teemed with BCC membership input and feedback.

Bob entered the first three issues in a literature competition at Pan Pacific Expo '83, and received a silver award. Heartened by that, he entered a year's worth in the STaMpsHOW '84 competition, and was "profoundly disappointed" when it received a silver-bronze award. "Clearly, appearance was the major, if not the sole, criterion of judging," wrote Bob, and I agree. He sought help to improve its appearance. "The content of *TI* is already gold medal level, as far as I am concerned; would that the judges would read it and could appreciate it." Nevertheless, it received a large-bronze at AMERIPEX in 1986.

Later that year, an article of my own, typed on my 1930s vintage Underwood Five and illustrated with second-generation Xerox copies, contributed further to *The Interleaf's* wretched appearance, and I loved it. So did Bob. (That manual typewriter is the closest instrument I have to a word processor. It's what I use when a pen isn't appropriate. I have never owned an electric or electronic typewriter, let alone a Macintosh mouse.)

A year later, Bob was fired, although the man responsible wrote, hypocritically, "Robert Greenwald has resigned as editor, effective December 10, regrettably bringing to a close, with this issue, his efforts on behalf of *The Interleaf* since 1982."

Bob's successor, emperor (editor-president) Gerhard Korn, has snazzed up *The Interleaf* considerably. Ever since his March 1988 debut, it has been a desktop publisher's dream, with perfectly spaced and shadowed outline letters in the banner, uniform and justified two-column type, handsome illustrations, and running footers. But Gerry has beaten the life out of *The Interleaf*.

With Bob at the helm, it had been irreverent, rowdy, even rude, but always open, interesting, and fun, as every hobby publication should be. Gerry doesn't even acknowledge letters from readers/members, let alone print them. (Actually I assume there are some people of sufficient importance to merit replies from him, but I am not among them, even though one of my letters raised doubts about the accuracy of certain booklet listings in the German *Michel* catalog.) A group of collectors I respect slated him for a second term as BCC president, so he must exhibit some philatelic virtue, but he plainly lacks the minimum qualifications to be an editor.

Perhaps a more accurate title for Gerhard Korn would be temperor (editor pro tem and president), since he has supposedly been searching without success for a real editor ever since he fired Bob Greenwald almost two years ago. And assuming he does eventually relinquish the post, *The Interleaf* might be born again.

*The Interleaf* before and after the advent of desktop publishing is sufficient to demonstrate that, despite a dramatic improvement in appearance, its value as a hobby publication has

declined, at least for people who believe a hobby is supposed to be fun. Sure, I'd rather have Bob Greenwald and the new look, but if forced to choose, I'd take the old *Interleaf* any day.

### The Ubiquitous Gremlins

Back in the old days, when live proofreaders checked my copy, typographical errors occasionally escaped notice and appeared in print, but rarely caused anguish except when digits of an address or telephone number were transposed. Now that those people and their sensibilities have been replaced, I long for their return.

Publishers who process my words using the latest fashion in artificial intelligence ruin the copy just as often as their predecessors did. Today's errors, always ascribed to glitches or gremlins, are qualitatively worse than those committed by editors using their natural intelligence or lack of it. The most frequent and maddening mistake is to substitute one properly spelled word for another that reverses my meaning, usually *not* for *now* or vice versa. Once my word *impotent* appeared in print as *important*, hardly the same thing.

Despite the widespread use of spelling checkers, the word *led* is misspelled in print as *leàd* more often than it is spelled correctly.

Every computer I've ever met has dropped phrases, lines, and sometimes whole paragraphs without warning. This is especially irksome when it happens to important legal documents. Even though my attorney has a state-of-the-art word processor and laser printer, I must proofread every copy of every affidavit before signing, which makes her computer far less efficient than her old typewriter.

In typesetting this supplement, Joe Frye's computer permitted him to type *test* for *text*, *pres* for *press*, *than* for *then*, *naturel* for *natural*, and *hear* for *heart*. In a recent *Linn's*, the computer dropped one line of type in my coil column, fatally garbling an inventory of expensive stamps lost by or stolen from a collector at STAmPsHOW.

### Grammar and Style

Bob Greenwald is proud that his copy arrived here with every word properly spelled and counted, but his computer has not unsplit his infinitives or perfected his style. Normally that is the editor's job, but I have restrained myself here in order to have a bit of fun making this point. Personally, I'd be reluctant to commit serious money to the purchase of equipment that permits writers in English to use words like *hopefully* and *importantly*; sequences like "*First . . . , next . . . , Thirdly . . . , Finally . . .*," and word breaks like "*Lawr-*." Perhaps all this is some software peddler's little joke, but I doubt it. I think it is evidence that a computer cannot yet replace a competent editor.

I have observed a steady decline in effective writing skills at the *Clarion-Ledger*, Jackson's daily newspaper, as computer literacy replaced literacy as a requirement for reporters and columnists. The ability to write proper English, not MS-DOS, ought to remain the defining quality of an editor. I have never met a computer programmer who could

communicate well without an interpreter, and programmers are the first to teach, "Garbage in, Garbage out."

To beat up on Bob Greenwald a bit more: reread his sixth paragraph. It approaches the scansion of a fine poem or sermon, with "can be purchased . . . can be absorbed . . . can take . . . can submit . . . can read and revise . . . can be incorporated . . . can take . . . can be captured and converted . . .," but is ruined by "consists of retrieving." Careful rewriting or editing would have rescued this sequence, helping Bob communicate more effectively and elegantly, while rendering the technique itself almost invisible. No computer can achieve that aim. Those programs that do intervene editorially would have tended to do the opposite, by questioning the repetition of "can."

For 40 years I have been writing prose with pencil and pen. When necessary, I have copied my written text on my typewriter. Now Bob Greenwald says I must boot up or butt out. Fortunately he is, for now, in the minority, judging by the letters I receive. But I'm glad he presented his argument so forcefully. Computers are undoubtedly useful tools for philatelic writers and publishers. If I can ever afford one, I'm sure I'll enjoy it immensely, applying all the lessons contained in this special supplement. It may even become another hobby for me, as it has for Karen Weigt.

(A computer is not the only essential of modern living I lack. My home does not have central heat and air, a color television, a video cassette recorder, a microwave oven, or a compact disc player. I drive a 1976 Toyota.)

Effective communication presupposes a message worth communicating, not a particular medium, and even less a specific device. Use your computers all you can, and enjoy them. Take to heart the advice our experts have presented here. But do not make the mistake of believing a computer can write, or edit, anything you'd wish to read.

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### Philatelic Typography

I produced the "camera-readies" for this publication with my new "IBM Clone" 80386 SX computer system and a laser printer. If you'd like similar quality in your journal, send me a current edition, note your typography and production methods. Will try to help you.

Your typographer *will be* familiar with the languages of philately if we may be of service to you.

Please write or call.

Joe F. Frye  
Box 22308

Memphis, TN 38122-0308

[Telephone 901) 327-8984, 7-10 pm CST]

with the latest issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*. The latter now has the appearance of being run off by a dot matrix printer . . . while your Sept. 26-note looks professionally typeset and much more polished. In fact, oddly enough, I much prefer the old look to the new . . . and am hoping, also, that the "Flag" or "Banner" can be brought back into play on the front cover.

I guess we're in the weird position of being a publication mainly sent to writers/editors . . . all of whom are people used to putting things into print. Thus, our newsletter needs to look as polished as possible from the typesetting point of view. Will appreciate hearing from you on all of the above when it's convenient.

But no matter what, I have always been deeply moved by the expedient and professional manner in which the newsletter is published and circulated. Of all such "newsletter"-type publications in our hobby, it is, by far, the very best! Cheerz to ya'.

[My blushes, Watson! I have always tried to produce the best quality product possible with tools and knowledge available. I trust you will find this further improvement (?) pleasurable. (His reference to typefaces/legibility compares before-and-after discovery of the dip-switch problem mentioned in Pres. Message on front page.) Even the best dot-matrix printer whose work I have seen is sad compared to the last issue, which used the same Epson GQ-3500 laser printer as this one will use. The printer, bless his expectant-father heart, did not produce the quality I expected, and there was no more time to redo it. Thanks for writing! jff]

From Richard H. Byne

As a long-time member of the APS Writers Unit No. 30, this is just a short note to applaud your latest edition (Whole Number 85).

*WordPerfect* is my choice, apparently yours also, and it's the "right" choice for this, I think. The columns, right justifications, etc., are attractive, easy to read, and a great improvement.

The shaded titles leave something to be desired, but I also note that you write they will soon be replaced by italics. Good show! Absolutely first-class. Best regards.

[Purr! I think I shall go and have a plate of lasagna and pull my Conestoga cover over my bald head for a while! jff]

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Two Philatelic Beginners Books — A Comparison

By Felix Ganz

*An Introduction to Stamp Collecting* by Steven J. Rod. Linn's Stamp News, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. 1989. \$2.95 postpaid.

*Jugendlexikon Philatelie* by Wolfram Grallert. Berlin Transpress VEB Verlag für Verkehrswesen. Second edition, 1987.

While Wolfram Grallert's work specifically addresses itself to young collectors in the DDR, treating the thousand most important (according to the author) terms in philately alphabetically, with a tremendous number of cross references,

Steven Rod's guide addresses itself to any beginning collector, old or young.

Rod wants to help—practically and theoretically—Grallert desires to educate, with a lot of subtle (and frequently not so subtle) references to the political credo of East Germany.

When Rod discusses the soaking of stamps (title on page 150) it takes him three pages of admonitions on what *not* to soak before we arrive at hints: "cold water; beware of running inks; avoid newspaper pages as dryers." Grallert apparently is above describing how or why to soak stamps; but he has several entries: *Wasserbadabfärbung* (colors running in water); *Wasserempfindlichkeit* (color solubility in water); *Wasserfarben* (water soluble colors); and *Wasserlöslichkeit* (colors affected by immersion in water or other fluids) which tell a young or beginning collector that harm can result from thoughtless washing of stamps.

Grallert lists all Eastern countries' philatelic organizations and suggests that it is a great experience to trade with similar thinking young people in socialist countries. Only the FIP is mentioned as a worldwide organization that promotes friendship through stamps. Rod also mentions the FIP, but treats it more like a clearing house for international show dates than as a "tool of friendship." He also mentions such capitalistic things as "Bidding at Auction" or "Dealing with Dealers"—aspects of philately perfectly natural to us, but almost unknown or perhaps prohibited in East Germany.

Both works stress their own country's philatelic beliefs, and sometimes different collecting habits result in diametrically opposed advice. Thus Rod preaches that postal cards (only in the U.S. are those things called postal cards, by the way, while in the British Commonwealth that type of postal stationery sails under the name of postcards) *never* must be mutilated (by cutting off the value imprint) while Grallert blithely advises that cut-outs from postal stationery (this practice still is condoned by many postal administrations) preferably should be collected on entire piece.

Different countries, different habits. And that is really the big problem in trying to compare two essentially similar attempts at getting a beginning collector started on the right foot. Both authors do this, and both succeed rather well, considering the total and utter difference of the hobby of stamp collecting in a Western and an Eastern country.

Grallert has a lengthy appendix on cancelation types, and cancelations take up a good part of the basic text pages as well. Some of the terms used to describe these cancelation types are wonderfully lengthy German terms, such as *Zahnkranznummernstempel* (date stamp inside a cogwheel rim); *Einkreisdoppelsegmentstempel* (single rim postmark with semi-circular segments above and below the date bridge) *Einkreisgitterdobbelbrückenstempel* and *Einkreisvolldoppelbrückenstempel*—terms that need two paragraphs to be properly described in English. He also includes a perennial calendar in another appendix, and one wonders a bit to what "youth" he is really addressing himself . . . or is it mere German *Gründlichkeit* which demands that "effrying must be included."

Offhand, and in conclusion, I am more sympathetic to Steven Rod's opus, although Grallert's lexicon always defines clearly and cleanly any of the hundreds of entries. But Rod leaves one with the idea that anyone may collect as he/she pleases (although the author gives pointers on what is good and what not) while throughout Grallert's lexicon one cannot avoid hearing the dogma of the people's republic on every other page . . . and that somehow hurts that book. ■

## Fiscal History

By Peter Martin

*Second Federal Issue 1801-1802* by W. V. Combs. The American Revenue Association, Rockford, Iowa 50468-0056. 7" by 10", hard covers. 142 + xvi pages. 1988. ISBN 0-94573500-6. \$20 postpaid.

This is a companion volume to the *First Federal Issue 1798-1801* written by the same author and published in 1979 by The American Philatelic Society. It is the first book published by the ARA with funds received from the late Vernon R. Thomson for the purpose of publishing special revenue related studies.

The first book was very well received and this second book will undoubtedly be acclaimed as well.

*Second Federal Issues 1801-1802* is a study of the embossed revenue stamps issued by the United States between 1801 and 1802. These stamps have become known as the Second Federal Issue.

There is a paucity of information published about this specialized area and this work is a major contribution. Historical background is extensive, most usages and varieties are covered, and the appendices provide copies of the edicts and correspondence of the Commissioner of the Revenue pertaining to these stamps.

The work is well written, well footnoted, and the addition of a frequency index to identify the relative scarcity of the items discussed is highly useful.

Extra steps were taken to make this not only an excellent reference work but also a quality publication. The white matté 70 pound paper is expensive but the extra quality contributes to the excellent reproduction of most of the more than 80 photographs that support the study. The Smythe sewn binding is also a fine addition, as the book lies flat no matter what page is opened.

A useful addition for writers and editors is the colophon located on the book's last page. Text for this book was written on an Apple IIe with text files transferred to an Apple Macintosh. *Pagemaker* was used for page layout and camera ready copy was produced on an Apple LaserWriter. Text is 12 on 14 point *Times* with 10 point used for quotations and footnotes.

One note: For some reason U.S. Embossed Revenue Stamped Paper was added as a subtitle to the second title page. Since the cover and the first title page don't carry this subtitle it would have been better to leave it out altogether.

With all the interest about postal history that is currently being expressed, this book makes an excellent addition to the study of the United States' early fiscal policies. ■

## Writer's Reference Shelf

By Ken Lawrence

*Linn's World Stamp Almanac*, Fifth Edition. *Linn's Stamp News*, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. 5½" by 8½" soft cover. 994 pages. 1989. \$19.95 postpaid.

*Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1988*. *Linn's Stamp News*, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. 5½" by 8½" soft cover. 384 pages. 1989. \$18 postpaid.

*Linn's Philatelic Gems 4* by Donna O'Keefe. *Linn's Stamp News*, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. 5½" by 8½" soft cover. 167 pages. 1989. \$9.95 postpaid.

*Mellone's Specialized Catalogue of First Day Ceremony Programs and Events* by Dr. Scott Pelcyger. FDC Publishing Co., P.O. Box 206, Stewartsville, NJ 08886. 8½" by 11" soft cover, spiral bound. 154 pages. 1989.

*Michel Asien II 1989/90*, Übersee Band 5/II. Schwaneberger Verlag GMBH, Munich. 6" by 7¼" soft cover. 432 pages. 1989. Imported by Lighthouse Publications, P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

*Weebau World Space Catalogue* by Marietta and Raymond Weemaels and Pierre Bauduin. R-Editions pvba, St. Katelijnevest 34, B-2000 Antwerp, Belgium. 6¼" by 9¼" soft cover. 989 + xv pages. 1988. 1,495 Belgian francs plus postage.

*Edition Philatelia*. House of Stamps Division of Technodif SA, Quai de Corsier 10A, CH-1246 Corsier-Port, Switzerland. 7½" by 10¼" soft cover, saddle stitched. 32 pages. 1989. 12 Swiss francs plus postage.

Let us hope that *Linn's* sells a lot of copies of the new *Almanac*. The fourth edition has been increasingly obsolete, and not having a current source to consult for needed philatelic information has been frustrating. The fifth edition has solved the problem for now; I hope it won't be another seven years before we have the sixth. We writers have a much greater need for this book than average collectors do, but our business alone cannot justify the cost of publication.

The *Linn's Yearbook* series has become so established that future generations of collectors won't properly appreciate it unless for some reason it stops coming out. This item too is far more important for writers than for anyone else. I learned this lesson the hard way, while writing my book on plate number coils, to be published by *Linn's* in 1990. Researching stamps issued before 1983, the date of the first *Yearbook*, was infinitely more difficult than the years since.

Donna O'Keefe's *Linn's Gems* series has the succinct summaries we need for all the world's most famous stamps. Even if your writing only draws upon classic gems as metaphors, as mine does, her books belong on the reference shelf. It is a wonder to me that there are still so many philatelic masterpieces to write about, but I'm sure we haven't seen the end of this series yet. (I am envious of authors whose books write themselves, as Donna O'Keefe's do. One of these days

I want to try writing a column that automatically converts to a book when the accumulated copy weighs a pound.)

If you want to be up on the latest fashion, I recommend Mellone's ceremony program catalog. Scott Pelcyger, the author, is the premier collector and scholar of this field, which in one year's time has been swept from the fringe to the center of U.S. philately by the force of Postal Service marketing. I don't expect the subscription promotion of ceremony programs to "succeed," in terms that will justify continuing it much longer, but I do expect the promotion to take root in creating a constituency for the programs issued before the USPS decided they had money-making potential. The very existence of the Mellone catalog makes this material available to the topical collectors who need it, in a way that has been difficult up to now.

Topical collectors and writers are also the people who will welcome the second volume of the German Michel Asia catalog, which includes only stamps (and some would say "stamps") issued by the smaller countries, colonies, enclaves, and protectorates that once existed on the Arabian peninsula in places now governed by one of the Yemen states or the United Arab Emirates. Whether you regard these as stamps or "stamps," they have a brighter future than most traditionalists would like to admit, as topical collecting gains momentum. As long as the major English-language stamp catalogs ignore these issues, the Michel book will be their bible.

But get the Weebau tome if you want to see what a catalog of the future will be like. The authors have tried to list every space-related stamp from any stamp-issuing entity in the world, including locals and strike posts. Numbers and prices are reproduced from Scott, Michel, and Yvert et Tellier catalogs, so the book is a concordance for international exchange. The authors have made mistakes, for example in including some British strike post locals under United States, but they certainly deserve an A for effort.

In the November 1989 *Astrophile*, Leo Malz questions whether two Central African Republic stamps listed in *Weebau* actually exist.

Now that the task has been done for the world's most popular topic, let's hope that we'll see more catalogs tailored to the needs of topical collectors.

Finally, now that the business of marketing philatelic replicas, once known as forgeries, has gone upscale, I recommend acquiring the House of Stamps catalog. For now all you need to do is tuck it away and wait a few years. After a suitable interval, start watching major auction catalogs to see how many experts will be fooled by this material.

It is clear that plenty of unscrupulous philatelic hangers-on are banking on that potential. A few years ago, wonderful mint reproductions of six German Zeppelin stamps were on sale at the hobby counters of West German department stores for 10 Deutsche Marks, at a time when a U.S. dollar was worth about 3.50DM. House of Stamps, marketing the products of Pro-phil Forum of West Germany, is selling reproductions of the same six stamps today for 40.00DM each, when a dollar buys only 1.80DM.

Few real stamps have multiplied 24 to 47 times in value during the recent five-year period. Writers will do the hobby a great service if we can turn these "gems" into bad investments. ■

## Russian Postal History — Two Reviews

By Ernst M. Cohn

*Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, by Peter A. Michalove and David M. Skipton. 9¼" by 12", two hard cover volumes in slipcase, xi + 488 pages, many illustrations. 1989. \$95 (in US) or \$113 abroad (surface mail paid) from John H. Otten, Publisher, 1110 East Main Street, Post Office Box 577, Urbana, IL 61801-0577.

In his *Philosophical Dictionary*, Voltaire mentions that "the minister who had the postal department did not open the letters of any individual, except when he had the need to know what they contained."

This scholarly, detailed work treats not only secret postal censorship in imperial Russia but also the open military mail censorship practiced there before and during WW I. It covers the personalities, institutions, and practices involved. As the authors state, Russia has been free of postal censors for a mere 8-10 months in the last 300 years, from February to November or December 1917. During some of those centuries, secret censorship was outlawed (just as it was during the French Revolution, when it was practiced with a vengeance).

Maps of Russia with the most important cities are shown in front and back of both volumes, the first of which consists of a dedication, preface, definition of perustration, introduction, part I - perustration (7 chapters), part II - civil censorship (2 chapters), and four appendices. Volume 2 contains Part III - overt military censorship (2 chapters), five appendices, a chapter on postal censorship handstamps, a bibliography and an index (the last carries the mistaken head "Bibliography" on some pages and is followed by a brief index of military units).

Chapter 12 (the last) is actually a catalog of the handstamps; it opens with a table of contents. It alone occupies over 180 pages. To me, the most interesting part is that dealing with secret censorship; it is loaded with historical details of all sorts.

Paper, binding, and quality of reproductions are excellent, proof reading quite good. The book is recommended not only to students of Russian postal history but to those interested in censorship generally. It is also sure to be a bibliophile's delight.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Russian Postmarks - An Introduction and Guide*, by A. V. Kiryushkin and P. E. Robinson. 8½" by 12", soft cover, 110 pages. £10 in UK, \$18 postpaid to US (add \$6 for airmail), from Philip E. Robinson, 2 Rydalhurst Avenue, Sheffield, England S6 4BG.

This is a study and valuation of the civil and military postmarks of Imperial Russia, with supporting material on postal history, rates, forgeries, Julian calendar, transliteration and notes on Russian grammar, a glossary, maps, list of districts, and a bibliography.

The chapters deal with postal history, pre-adhesive postmarks, numeral cancels, dated postmarks, machine postmarks,



postmarks of telegraph offices, railway postmarks, steamship postmarks, FPO marks, mute cancels, "to pay" marks, special purpose postmarks. There are nine appendices.

The text is tersely written, so there is much information in little space. It is clear and legible, as are the almost 650 line drawings and the maps. I was informed that the final binding is better than the (perfectly adequate) plastic binding of my advance copy.

In view of the preceding review, it is amusing to note what the authors say about censorship: "Until the First World War, the only types of mail censored in Russia were items of printed matter. In 1799, censorship of printed items from abroad was introduced at St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Warsaw, and some other towns. During peacetime there was no censorship of correspondence." Nevertheless, the book is highly useful to the specialist, to whom it is recommended. ■

### Publisher's Correction:

The complete 1988 edition of the *Commemorative Cancellation Catalog* reviewed in the Third Quarter PC, including index, costs \$12, and the 1989 edition costs \$15. The price for both is \$25 from General Image, Inc., P.O. Box 335, Maplewood, NJ 07040. ■

### Observations on the Philatelic Literature Competition at STaMpsHOW 89

By Felix Ganz

I happened to be one of the three philatelic literature judges (no apprentice) at STaMpsHOW '89 in Anaheim, Calif., and I would like to present a few "posthumous" comments.

1. The general quality of books, articles, and periodicals submitted for review undoubtedly is "up." Whether this is the result of editors and authors actually following the advice given by previous juries, or because of old and new faces in philatelic literature simply desiring to put out quality material, often on vastly improved equipment, I do not know; but there is no need to share the concern of one "old hand" who expressed cautious misgivings that a "prostitution of award levels" might be in the making.

2. My one continuing unhappiness with too many authors and editors of English language publications stems from the observation that many of them blissfully ignore the existence of diacritical marks in other languages (when cited, etc.). Is it really *so* hard to reproduce a foreign letter adorned with one of those "spices of a language" by back-pedaling one typewriter key and hitting, for example, the " sign in order to transform an a, e, i, o, or u into the proper ä, ë, ï, ö, or ü? That would eliminate such disturbing mix-ups as "Sage" (fairy tale) and "Säge" (saw); "Note" (note) and "Nöte" (needs); or "Buhne" (dike) and "Bühne" (stage), etc. Likewise a Danish o or O can be changed to the correct ø or Ø by a slash; a Swedish "å" constructed from an "a" and a "ö", or a cedilla by marrying a comma with a c: "ç."

The French, Spanish, Hungarian, et al. graves and aigus can at least be approximated by the apostrophe mark; and

even a tilde can be suggested by adding a hyphen, one line above the "n" or "s" to come out "ñ" or "s̃." The circumflex, or certain Czech diacritical marks may just have to be inserted by hand, such as "ě" or "š."

Please, dear colleagues: give attention to such details!

3. I observed a distinct reduction in the number of submitted club newsletters—those often charming, innocent, and slapped-together sources of information for a highly limited group of readers, and very often dastardly bad in content, form, and presentation. Such publications now have a chance at being evaluated and rewarded via the APS's "Chapter Newsletter Contest."

4. The number of materials submitted is on the increase—a healthy sign—and judges are required to do a lot of homework prior to a literature competition in order to be fair and really reading all entries *in toto*. Times of looking at a submitted publication from the outside or general appearance, and then judging the contents from such cursory inspection, are over; and judges persisting in such behavior ought to be barred for life! But if the three of us at STaMpsHOW had not requested and received dozens of the entries ahead of time or found them in nearby philatelic libraries (if not our own) we would have had less than ten minutes per entry including discussion and medal level agreement, in the time allotted us for our work.

5. Perhaps APS could try a two-tiered literature competition/exhibition permitting an author or editor to show his/her work either *competitively* (to be judged and reviewed) or simply to *exhibit* it in the available literature frames, with a second copy immediately available to any interested party. Such entries might receive a "Certificate of Participation."

6. It is very difficult *not* to fall into the "FIP Trap" of an award system by points—a system which in my opinion has miserably failed at a number of international literature exhibitions of late; or how could it happen that some entries submitted by U. S. authors or editors received considerably higher medal awards at those international displays than at national U. S. shows with the identical entry?

7. Yes, outer appearance, presentation, quality of paper, ragged vs. justified right margin, neat binding vs. careless corner stapling, etc. *do* make a different initial impact on a reviewer (and can lower the award by one level); but it must be kept in mind all the time that proper, challenging content and research remain the overriding factors in determining an award level.

8. It is highly regrettable (though understandable) that few authors/editors attend philatelic literature critiques, and even the exhibitions . . . unlike their philatelic brothers who watch over their exhibits like agonized mother hens all the way through an exhibition! It would be so much nicer to engage in a critical discussion right on the spot than sending them a one-page "final" and undisputable judgment.

Editor's note: Felix Ganz assumes too much in thinking that most typewriters have a degrees symbol. [Producer's note: I used lower-case o above a to make å on most typewriters. This before obtaining the new equipment which produced *this* remarkable typographic exercise.] ■



## STaMpsHOW 89 Literature Awards

### Gold

*American Philatelic Congress Book, 1988*, Barbara R. Mueller, editor; *The Posthorn*, Gene Lesney, editor; *The History of Oleomargarine Tax Stamps and Licenses in the United States*, Carter Litchfield; *The Second Federal Issue 1801-1802: U.S. Embossed Revenue Stamped Paper*, W. V. Combs; and *Malta: Finding a Treasure Trove of Information*, Paul and Barbara Kayfetz.

### Vermeil

*British Post Office Notices 1762-1839*, Volume 1, Michel M. Raguin; *Cayman Islands Postmarks and Postal History*, Thomas E. Giraldo and Peter D. McCann; *Handbook of Cuba, Part III: The Republic*, R. J. Roy, Jr., and William McP. Jones; *The Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook*, Randy L. Neil (with felicitations); *The American Revenuer*, Volume 42, 1988, Kenneth Trettin, editor; *Bermuda Post*, Thomas J. McMahon, editor; *British Caribbean Philatelic Journal*, Mark W. Swetland, editor; *The China Clipper*, Donald R. Alexander, editor; *Long Island Postal Historian*, J. Fred Rodriguez, editor; *Luren*, Paul A. Nelson, editor; *P. S. - A Quarterly Journal of Postal History*, Robert Dalton Harris and Diane DeBlois, editors; *Postal Stationery*, John R. Wimer, editor; *Stamp Collector*, Dane S. Claussen, editor; *Tell*, Steven W. Weston, editor; *Western Express*, Western Cover Society; *1869 Times*, Jon W. Rose, editor; "The Rock Issue: Gibraltar's First Pictorial Issues Broke Tradition," Paul Kayfetz; "The Use of Nepalese Postage Stamps in Telecommunications," Lester A. Michel.

### Silver

"Collecting Stamps for Pleasure and Profit," Barry Krause; *The Handbook of Tennis Philately*, Lester M. Yerkes; *The Irish S.P.I. Censor Labels, 1939-1945*, Charles J. G. Verge (with felicitations); *The Trident Issues of Ukraine*, Inger Kuzych; *Scandinavian Collectors Club 1989 Library Index with First Supplement*, W. E. Melberg; *Catalog of Scandinavian Revenue Stamps, Volume II, Denmark*, Paul A. Nelson; *USCS Naval Cover Cachet Makers Catalog*, Robert D. Rawlins; *The Airpost Journal*, Frank H. Blumenthal, editor; *El Boletín*, Cuban Philatelic Society; *The Carto-Philatelist*, Mark D. Larkin, editor; *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, Mirko L. Vondra, editor; *The Interleaf*, Journal of the Booklet Collectors Club, Gerhard G. Korn; *Modern Postal History Journal*, Terence Hines; *The Petro Philatelist*, Thomas C. Hughes; *Philatelia Chimica et Physica*, C. S. Kettler; *The Queensland Stamp Collector*, Ron Wickens; *The Revealer*, Patrick J. Ryan, Sr.; *State Revenue Newsletter*, Terence Hines; *Topical Time*, ATA Journal, Glen Crago; *Ukrainian Philatelist*, I. Kuzych; "Editor's Notes," Dane S. Claussen; "Innovations Galore at FLOREX '87," Carl M. Burnett; "Panama: 1887-1888 Issue: Alleged Reprints: Favor Printings," James B. Helme; "The World of Stamps," Edward J. Davis, Jr.

### Silver-Bronze

*Transportation and Other Plate Number Coils*, Joseph Agris; *The Coil Line*, Tom Maeder, editor; *Maximaphily*, Gary Denis, editor; *The Pitcairn Log*, Mrs. T. R. Hughes, editor; *Postal Himal*, Lester A. Michel; *PMCC Bulletin*, Kimberlee K. Terry;

*Seaposter, the Journal of the Maritime Postmark Society*, Tom Hirschinger, editor; *Stamp & Tongs*, Kenneth T. Stewart, editor; *The Topical Woman*, Davida Kristy, editor.

### Bronze

*Calgary STAMPede*, Dale Speirs, editor; *Mexican Journeys*, Philips B. Freer.

## SESCAL 89 Literature Awards

### Handbooks & Special Studies

#### Gold

Ken Kutz, *Gold Fever*; Gilbert Plass, Geoffrey Brewster, and Richard H. Salz, *Canal Zone Stamps*; Elizabeth C. Pope, editor, *Opinions V*.

#### Vermeil

Barry Krause, *Collecting Stamps for Pleasure and Profit*.

#### Silver

Dr. William E. Melberg, *Scandinavian Collectors Club 1989 Library Index*; Brian Pope, editor, *A Bicentennial Resumé and Cumulative Index to "Black Swan"*; Peter Poulson and Paul A. Nelson, *Catalog of Scandinavian Revenue Stamps, Vol. 2, Denmark*; Richard Stambaugh, *United States First-Class Mail Permit Catalog*; Charles J. G. Verge, *The Irish S.P.I. Censor Labels, 1939-1945*.

#### Silver-Bronze

Anders Backman and Robert Forrester, *The Smaller Channel Islands Catalog-1989*; Brian Pope and Phil Thomas, *Production of One Penny Post Cards for Western Australia*.

### Periodicals

#### Vermeil

*1869 Times*, 1869 Pictorial Research Assn., Jon Rose; *Luren*, Scandinavian Collectors Club, Paul A. Nelson; *The Revealer*, Eire Philatelic Assn., Patrick A. Ryan, Sr.; *Transit Postmark Collector*, Mobile Post Office Society, Douglas N. Clark.

#### Silver

*Chesstamp Review*, Chess on Stamps Study Unit, Russell E. Ott; *Philatelia Chimica et Physica*, Chemistry & Physics on Stamps Study Unit, C. S. Kettler; *Postal Himal*, Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle, Lester A. Michel; *Ukrainian Philatelist*, Ukrainian Philatelic & Numismatic Society, Inger Kuzych.

#### Silver-Bronze

*Lundy Collectors Club Philatelic Quarterly*, Lundy Collectors Club, Roger S. Cichorz; *Meter Stamp Society Bulletin*, Meter Stamp Society, Richard Stambaugh, David Clark.

#### Bronze

*The Stamp & Tongs*, Claremont County (Ohio) Stamp Club, Kenneth A. Stewart.

## CHICAGOPEX '89 Literature Awards

### Handbooks

#### Gold

*The American Philatelic Congress Book, 1988*, Barbara R. Mueller, editor. *Unites States Internal Revenue Tax-Paid Stamps printed on Tin-Foil and Paper Tobacco Wrappers*, John Alan Hicks, author.

## Vermell

*The Stamps of Barbados*, Edmund A. Bayley, FRPSL, author.  
*Zeppelin Weltrundfahrt 1929*, Hans Sander, author.

## Silver

*Handbook of Cuba*, Part III, The Republic, William McP. Jones and R. J. Roy, Jr., authors; *Germany Philatelic Society 40th Anniversary Anthology*, Diana Manchester, editor; *United States Stamped Envelopes, Essays, and Proofs*, William H. Maisel, author, Arthur Thomas, coordinator.

## Silver-Bronze

*The Smaller Channel Islands-1989 Catalogue*, Anders Backman and Robert Forrester, authors; *Scandinavian Collectors Club 1989 Library Index*, Dr. W. E. Melberg, author.

## Bronze

*Printing On Stamps*, Mark H. Winnegrad, author.

## Periodicals

### Gold

*German Postal Specialist*, Germany Philatelic Society, Austin Dulin, editor; *Mexicana*, Mexico Elmhurst Philatelic Society, Edward M. Nissen, editor.

### Vermell

*The China Clipper*, The China Stamp Society, Donald R. Alexander, editor; *The Confederate Philatelist*, Confederate Stamp Alliance, Col. Stefan T. Jaronski and Col. Genevieve Gwynne, editors; *The Danzig Report*, Germany Philatelic Study Group, John H. Bloecher, editor; *Inflation Study Group Bulletin* of the Germany Philatelic Society, Diana Manchester, editor (with felicitations); *The Interleaf*, The Booklet Collectors Club, Gerhard G. Korn, editor.

### Silver

*Philatelia Chimica et Physica*, Chemistry and Physics on Stamps Study Unit, C. S. Kettler, editor; *The Tughra Times*, The Turkey and Ottoman Philatelic Society, Charles G. Maki, editor; *Vorläufer*, Journal of the German Colonies Collectors Group, Study Group of the Germany Philatelic Society, John Kevin Doyle, editor (with felicitations).

### Silver-Bronze

*Campaign*, Napoleonic Age Philatelists, ATA Study Unit, Kenneth R. Berry, editor; *The Canadian Connection*, Canadian Study Unit, John G. Peebles, editor; *The Dispatcher*, Casey Jones Railroad Unit, ATA, Oliver C. Atchison, editor; *Lundy Collectors Club Philatelic Quarterly*, Roger S. Cichorz, editor; *The Masonic Philatelist*, Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Dr. Irwin M. Yarry, editor; *Pitcairn Log*, Pitcairn Island Study Group, Everett L. Parker, editor-publisher; *Postal Himal*, Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle, Lester A. Michel, editor; *Russian Zone Handoverprint Study and Research Group Bulletin*, James W. Busse, editor; *Stadtpost*, Journal of the Stadtpost Collectors Group, Peter F. Rogers, editor; *The Stamp and Tongs*, Clermont County Stamp Club Newsletter, Kenneth T. Stewart, editor; *Trident-Visnyk*, Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society, Wes Capar, editor; *W.P.C. Newsletter*, World Philatelic Congress of Israel, Holy Land Judaica Societies, A. Ben David, editor-publisher; *Yule Log*, Christmas Philatelic Club, Kathy Ward, editor.

### Bronze

*The New Haven Provisional*, New Haven Philatelic Society,

Michael Zelenak, editor; *The Philatelic Freemason*, Masonic Study Unit, Robert A. Domingue, editor.

### Certificate of Participation

*Philabook International*, C. Nieuwland, editor-publisher; *Putnam Philatelic Society Newsletter*, Herb Moore, editor.

**CHICAGOPEX Literature Special Award to Authors and Editors: (Handbook)** "For a definitive book of lasting philatelic value to the specialist and beginner:" *Zeppelin Weltrundfahrt 1929*, Hans Sander, author. **(Periodical)** "For outstanding creative efforts in publishing Danzig philatelic diversity:" *The Danzig Report*, Germany Philatelic Study Group, John H. Bloecher, editor. ■

## IPHLA '89 —

### International Philatelic Literature Exhibition

The Iphla '89 literature awards from the exhibition held in conjunction with Naposta '89 in Frankfurt, West Germany, April 19 to 23, 1989, are too extensive to report here, but the literature catalog itself is an attractive and wonderful reference book containing (in German) original articles on the Allied Military Posts' postal history in Germany 1945-1946, the French Zone 1945-1949, the Control Council series, the 1948 Building Series, and the Berlin Airlift, all illustrated in full color.

Any WU 30 member who wishes to borrow this book and the Naposta '89/Iphla '89 Palmares may do so by sending \$2.40 postage to your editor. ■

## Is Philately a Major Economic Factor?

By Herman Herst, Jr.

We like to think of stamps as a pretty important contribution to the economy of the country. It just is not so.

No one has ever figured out how much the stamp business grosses in a year. Uncle Sam feels that he sells \$100 million in mint stamps to collectors. He has no idea how many of these appear on letters years from now, when "investors" realize they are riding a very tired horse.

The stamp auction business could run up another \$100 million.

A lot of money, you say? The dog food industry runs well into the billions of dollars. Cosmetics runs \$5 billion or more.

The mail order business is larger than anyone realizes. Many people may call it "junk mail" but if it did not pay those who use it, it would soon be discontinued. Spencer Gifts, one of the larger mail order houses, sells its list of over 5 million buyers—not people who get their catalogs, but those who have bought from them.

Sometimes I wonder whether an outfit such as Spencer makes more money selling merchandise or renting out its mailing list. I have before me an offering of Spencer names.

One can buy names listed according to whether they paid by cash, check, or credit card. One can buy names by Zip code. (If one sells goods of interest to the wealthy, one may

buy 44120, 33480, or 60035; if selling mouse traps or roach sprays, one may get 02119 or 10026.)

The names are broken down by sex, by age (it would be interesting to learn how this is done), and even by race and religion. Actually, Spencer claims that their list has been broken down into 47 different categories.

In our own field, the most extensive mailing lists are those maintained by the auction houses. There was a time when the retail dealer used the mails for catalogs and price lists, but the cost of printing and mailing is so high today that few dealers even produce price lists. Auction mailing lists are closely guarded. Some are in the hands of professional mailers today, with "dummy names" on them to indicate if the list is unethically used. Seldom is improper use of the names made.

Years ago, auction houses did exchange lists of "dead" names, name for name, in a swap that was usually mutually beneficial. Bidders stop bidding in one firm's sales for little or no reason. Sometimes it is a grievance, the cause of which may be actual or imagined; perhaps the auction house no longer offers the sort of material that is of interest to the bidder. The name is removed from the auction firm's list, but it still has value. When I was in the game, before I discarded the "dead" names I would regularly exchange my names for another auction house's dead names.

It paid off—and it was very simple to find out that it did. The bidsheet in each auction catalog going out to another list was "keyed" with a simple number stamped on the corner. If the bidsheet came back with bids, I knew immediately the source of the name. After the sale, it was simple to check further to see how many of those bidders had been successful. Apparently it paid the other firm in the swap, for every few years I'd get requests to try again.

In the days when penny approvals were profitable, two of the larger approval houses were located at 87 Nassau Street. They were actually on the same floor. The so-called "mechanic" magazines had dozens of ads of firms offering penny approvals. Advertising in them was not cheap; it often ran \$1 or more per word. Approval houses would be happy if on a \$50 ad they received even ten replies.

One of the approval firms offered the cleaning ladies \$10 per week if each night, instead of consigning to the rubbish heap the sack of contents of its rivals' wastebaskets, the ladies would instead leave it inside their door. The next morning, approvals would be sent to each name on the envelopes in the wastebasket, and only then were the envelopes discarded.

The firm being victimized might never have known what was going on if his competitor did not boast one day of how his business was improving with a minimum of advertising.

Many years ago when Lyle Clark, now of Escondido, Calif., was doing penny approvals in Michigan, I called upon him to do a story on his operation. Actually, Clark was running thirty or so individual approval businesses, each from a different post office surrounding Muskegon. He had a truck which each day made the round of thirty post offices, picking up mail. It was an incredible business.

"I would sell quite a bit," Clark told me, "to someone buying from the Muskegon Stamp Co. Then he would suddenly tell me to stop sending approvals. I did . . . but then I would start sending under the name Rose City Stamp Co. I found out that when approval buyers told me they were no longer buying, it really was not so. They might stop buying from Muskegon, but they resumed when it was Rose City. I passed the names from firm to firm, and seldom lost a buyer that way."

Today, for the most part, the approval service does not exist. It would then cost 3¢ or 6¢ to send out the stamps and a like amount to prepay the return. Clark had about 30 employees on an assembly line operation, with the first in the line opening the returns and removing the money, through the ones who filled the empty spaces and made up new books to the final one in line who prepared the sending for the post office.

Not long ago I visited Lyle Clark again in California. His office occupied the top of a mountain, protected by an electrified fence, and only a single road leading to the top. It is the highest point in some 600 acres, covered with avocado trees, which offers Clark an alternate business.

And far from doing a penny approval business today, Clark showed me more \$5 Columbians than I have seen at one time since the old days a half century ago when I was selling them for twelve dollars each.

Editor's note: Todd Patric, Donald Sundman, and David Sundman, among others, might dispute the assertion, "Today, for the most part, the approval service does not exist."

#### For the WordPerfect Users

By Joe F. Frye

The main text in this issue is set in *Dutch Roman* 10 point, produced by Bitstream, Inc., and distributed free (!) to registered WordPerfect users on floppy diskettes—along with forty-odd more basic faces and sizes. All other text is set with some variation in size, style, or name of this same product. The next project is to learn to draw boxes and put text in them—or other things—to further improve the eye appeal and usefulness of our journal.

If you have compliments or criticisms please make them known. Either Ken Lawrence or I will be pleased to hear from you at any time. Ken is a remarkable editor. I have found a few instances where I disagreed with his judgment. On research I found him correct—except in the single spelling usage which notes *his* preference as equal in status to *mine*!

I am doing my very best to follow *his instructions*. Thanks to all who wrote me—and him. Keep it up!

WordPerfect made possible a complete updating (with *italics*, etc., like *this* edition) of the last (No. 3, 1989) issue of *PC*. \$5 o.g. US postage or currency [no checks please] brings one first-class or A.O. airmail in an envelope. NOTE: Orders will accumulate until March 1, 1990, and will then be filled by photocopy of the revised printout, in magazine format as usual. See my address top of first column page 54 (inside front cover) this issue.

See my "ad", Supplement, page viii, for typography work.

The Philatelic Communicator  
2501 Drexel Street  
Vienna, VA 22180-6906

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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## Secretary-Treasurer's Report (As of December 4, 1989).

### 1990 Membership Dues

On December 1, your Secretary-Treasurer placed in the mail the Writers Unit #30 1990 membership dues notice. It comes on an America the Beautiful postal card with a December 1 America the Beautiful postmark from World Stamp Expo as a souvenir. You may retain the postal card with postmark, but please include your name and correct mailing address with your remittance.

### Welcome

We welcome the following new members who have joined WU #30 since our last report:

**1546 Paul Brenner**, P.O. Box 3335, Maplewood, NJ 07040. Editor *Commemorative Cancellation Catalog*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.

**1547 Frank Norulak**, 1251 West Sepulveda Blvd., # 254, Torrance, CA 90502. Writer Bureau Issue Association *U. S. Specialist*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.

**1548 Frederick William Baumann**, 1609 Cedarbrook Place, Sidney, OH 45365. Staff writer *Linn's Stamp News*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.

**1549 David R. Warfel**, P.O. Box 355, Meadow Lands, PA 15347. Budding author for *Ice Cap News*. Sponsor: Robert de Violini.

**1550 John La Porta**, P.O. Box 2286, La Grange, IL 60525-8386. Editor: *Journal of Sports Philately* (Sports Philatelists International). Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

**1551 Stephen H. Olson**, 207 Loon Court, Foster City, CA 94404-1410. Columnist: *Stamp Wholesaler*. Sponsor: Dane S. Claussen.

**1552 Leon Daniel Mayo, Jr.**, P.O. Box 20837, Indianapolis, IN 46220. Former editor: *Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin* and *Philatelic Gazette* (Collectors' Club of Kansas City). Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.

**1553 William H. Hatton**, P.O. Box 622, Piqua, OH 45356. Senior Editor: *Linn's Stamp News* (1984-86); Assistant Catalogue Editor: *Scott Catalogues* (1986-present). Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

**1554 Denise M. Hatton**, P.O. Box 622, Piqua, OH 45356. Staff Writer: *Linn's Stamp News*. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

**1555 Charles Henderson**, 150-13 119th Avenue, Jamaica, NY 11434. Interested in learning to write about philately. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

### Resignations

**1536 Michael F. Triernan** of Boulder, Colorado.

### ZIP Code Correction.

Lea Blauvelt writes: "How come you have six digits in your ZIP Code when the rest of us have five?" Somewhere your Secretary-Treasurer's ZIP Code was incorrectly listed as 221808-6906. It is really 22180-6906.

Members whose ZIP Code on the mailing address does not include all nine digits are encouraged to send me your full nine-digit ZIP Code. It speeds up the mail—so says USPS.

### Back Issues of *The Philatelic Communicator*

Back issues of *The Philatelic Communicator* (formerly known as the *News Bulletin*) for 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1988 are still available at \$2.50 per issue postpaid or \$10 per year. If interested, send order, with check payable APS Writers Unit 30, to me at address below.

### Help Us Keep Your Mailing Address Current

Some WU 30 members are still not sending address changes to me. *Prompt* notice of changes—with effective date—should be sent as soon as known to insure correct handling of your mailings and save costs of returns and address corrections. Thank you.

George Griffenhagen - Sec. Treas., WU 30,  
2501 Drexel Street,  
Vienna, Virginia 22180-6906